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NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE return of political instability in France is disquieting, for the existing Chamber has two years more to run, and there is no telling how many administrations it may not overturn in that time. M. Chaumpey was in any event doomed from the start, for he had no hope of a majority without the aid of the Socialists, and their support was in itself sufficient to alienate many of those who had assisted him to defeat M. Tardieu, though the threatening attitude of the crowd outside seems to have had more than a little to do with the actual voting. The truth, of course, is that the Chamber was elected to support M. Poincaré, and so far he alone has proved able to control it. Left to itself, it seems likely to prove as indifferent to national interests as was its predecessor; so that unless its real master assumes control, or the French people make the

deputies fear for their very lives as they did four years ago, France is likely to prove a very uncertain factor in European politics in the near future.

In the present Chamber what may be termed the moderate Right and the moderate Left are pretty evenly balanced, so that to obtain a majority of any sort both have to look to their extremists; but they automatically alarm their more moderate sections, and so the vicious circle is complete. As has been said, the support of the Socialists was for this reason fatal to M. Chaumpey, while M. Marin and his followers, whose aid is indispensable to any ministry that inclines to the Right, are regarded as hardly better than Royalists by those Radicals who might otherwise vote, at any rate for a time, for M. Tardieu. In these circumstances it is not surprising that voices are again being raised in favour of a dissolution, but such a course suggests to many Frenchmen the plebiscites of the Second Empire and the *Seize Mai*, and the precedent is felt to be

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dangerous. As for the deputies themselves, they are probably more careless of opinion outside the walls of the Chamber than any popularly elected assembly in the world—that is to say, until the murmurs of the mob are physically audible, and then panic ensues.

Meanwhile, the Naval Conference has been compelled once again to mark time, and it is already being asked how much longer the delegates are to wait for the return of the representatives of France. In the interval the situation has hardly become any easier. The United States has refused to be a party to any Mediterranean Pact, and opinion in this country is undoubtedly hardening against any fresh commitments which would inevitably necessitate an increased, rather than a reduced, expenditure upon naval armaments. It is true that in some quarters there is talk of a tripartite agreement, but although this might suit Japan and the United States well enough, it is difficult to see how Great Britain could become a party to it, even if it related to capital ships alone, for she cannot define her requirements until she knows the programme of France and Italy. If the Conference fails, it will, however, be due not only to the French crisis, but also to the amount of time that was lost in preliminary courtesies, and to some extent, too, to the Prime Minister's idealism, which has made him reluctant to face the facts and so to prepare the ground thoroughly in advance. We hope that some way may yet be found to save the Conference from disaster, but at the moment the outlook is not very promising.

One unfortunate result the Conference has already had, and that is the dissemination to the four quarters of the world of the most gloomy picture of English conditions to-day. The representatives of the leading newspapers in every country are assembled in London to report the Naval Conference, and as that has provided singularly little "copy" up to date they have not unnaturally turned their attention to the people among whom they are staying, with, from the British point of view, the most deplorable consequences. We ourselves have recently read in the columns of the foreign Press descriptions of the state of Great Britain to-day which Gibbon would not have hesitated to apply to the Roman Empire in the last stages of its decay, and we tremble to think of the damage they must be doing to British credit abroad. It is, of course, only too true that our economic position is grave, but as a nation we have of late years acquired the habit of depreciating ourselves to an excessive degree, and the foreign correspondents in our midst at the present time seem to have taken this grumbling at its face value. The harm that has been, and is being, done is considerable, and there is little hope now of effacing the impression which has been produced upon the readers of newspapers all over the world.

Mr. Snowden's anticipation, for his remarks admit of no other construction, of a considerable deficit in the Budget is in no way surprising, and to some extent he is entitled to lay it at his predecessor's door, though Mr. Churchill himself foreshadowed a decline in the revenue. It would,

however, be idle to expect any other state of affairs while a Socialist administration is in office, with doles in money as the very basis of its policy. Whatever the deficit this year, it is likely to be infinitely greater next, for the Left Wing is now demanding the dole at birth, while the equally wrong-headed proposal of compulsory retirement at the age of sixty may soon make its appearance upon the Statute Book if the Government continues to yield to the extremists. At the present rate of progress it will, at any rate in theory, not be long before the vast majority of the population of this country is kept by the labour of a small minority. We say "in theory" advisedly, because in actual fact long before that happens Great Britain will be bankrupt, and the lucky few who have any money left will be enjoying it in countries where the economic fallacies so dear to Mr. Snowden and his colleagues are not tolerated. The progressive moral pauperization of the people is the heaviest item on the debit side of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's account.

The political ineptitude of the British non-official group in the Indian Legislative Assembly need surprise no one. Individually, and in their own businesses, its members are doubtless competent enough, but the character of their constituencies and the mode of election (whereby promotion to the legislature is the consequence of holding certain positions in purely commercial bodies) guarantee weakness in political group action. On a vast number of matters, the British non-official member has no mandate, and can use his own discretion only at a risk which the politician elected as such does not run. Rarely is he a man with any grasp of constitutional principle or parliamentary opportunity. Given a group to which this description generally applies, and hesitation over the Patel dispute with the Government of India and the extraordinary bargain struck, independently of the Legislative Assembly, by the disputants becomes quite intelligible. Only one member, Mr. Moore, has spoken plainly of the lack of confidence felt alike by the Government and by independent British opinion in India. Mr. Patel is obsessed with a sense of the importance of his office, and takes every opportunity of exaggerating the scope of his powers and of resenting fancied encroachments on his illegitimately expanded authority.

It is very useful in a discussion far too full of unrealities to be sharply reminded of the obvious, the humble truth scorned by the dealer in political rhetoric. This week the meeting of the Viceroy and the Indian Princes in their Chamber has reminded everyone that a very large part of India, consisting of their territories, already has Swaraj. It has, that is to say, the kind of rule which India has known longest and which is most congenial to all but a minute minority of more or less westernized Indian intellectuals. It bears no resemblance to the Swaraj demanded by those intellectuals. That, of course, does not decisively condemn the demand for quasi-parliamentary government; the decisive condemnation is that it would inevitably rest on a basis which does not admit of it being other than a sham for the vast majority of the people. We may draw attention to a notable difference

between the two Swarajs: that which we find in the Native States is compatible with loyalty to the British Crown.

It is to be hoped that the highly technical nature of the greater part of the memorandum issued by the Postmaster-General, to justify his decision not to employ the beam stations leased to the Imperial Communications Company for the conduct of the Government wireless telephony services, will not blind the general public to the importance of the issues raised by this document. It is true that the decision was the result of the recommendation of a Cabinet Committee, but the Postmaster-General was himself a member of it; the Government have refused to face a comparative test between its own stations at Rugby and Baldock and those of the company. What is involved is the whole future of Empire communications, and the subject demands far more serious consideration than the present Government have apparently thought fit to give it, and in our opinion Mr. Baldwin is upon very strong ground indeed in his demand for a debate upon the whole matter. Like more than one of his predecessors, Mr. Lees-Smith is far too inclined to make the infallibility of his department an article of faith, and to despise the co-operation of even the biggest corporations, but in respect of a question of this magnitude we shall be surprised if he does not find himself ultimately compelled to adopt a less pontifical tone than that which he has assumed in his memorandum.

Mr. Thomas says that "industry is alarmed," and adds that, for reasons quite beyond him, industry supposes the Labour Government to be "entirely unmindful of the industrial difficulty." What does he expect? Is it likely that a Socialist Government would inspire complete confidence in the capitalists engaged in industry? Is it likely that the prospect of a Socialist Budget, and of the scrapping of safeguarding, will hearten all who have anything to lose? Mr. Thomas is handicapped by his party, and notably by Mr. Snowden. He has good intentions, he is less bound by doctrine than most of his colleagues, he strives to promote employment; but policy in his section cannot but be affected by the broader policy of his party. The only persons who can really help him are representatives of a system which his party denounces as vicious and hopes in time to destroy. Where, then, is matter for his ingenuous surprise?

We welcome the decision of those members of Parliament who oppose the existing censorship of films to appoint a sub-committee, which is both to send a deputation to the London County Council on the subject of the prohibition of the Russian film 'Mother,' and to establish a permanent council to watch the restrictions on the exhibitions of films, as well as to press for a Government enquiry into the whole subject. The present state of affairs is extremely unsatisfactory, for no general enquiry has been held for upwards of twenty years, when the film industry was still in its infancy. No one wishes offensive films to be released for universal exhibition, but the present censorship has signally failed to stop more than one film of which an excessive eroticism was

the sole motive, while, apparently, all Russian films are banned as calculated to incite to sedition, though American productions depicting the most wanton extravagance are not considered as likely to rouse any feelings of resentment. The height of absurdity is reached by the regulation which prohibits the exhibition of a medical film to the staff of a hospital on the ground that the latter is a public place, though it would permit it to take place in a private house.

Surprise and indignation are aroused by the secrecy with which the Royal Institution has sold to an American collector a great mass of records, the Dorchester papers, relating to the American War of Independence. To the sale itself we raise no objection. The Institution may well, in these days, be in need of funds and unable to secure them except by the sale of such historical documents. But surely the State, other institutions in this country, and potential individual purchasers here should have been allowed an opportunity. As the transaction has actually been carried through, there has been no chance whatever of keeping the records in British hands, news of the completion of the sale being the first intimation that any sale had been contemplated. Surely there should be legislation obliging the possessors of important historical documents or works of art to give possible British purchasers reasonable opportunity before sending their treasures abroad.

Our Agricultural Correspondent writes: "The Pig Industry Council in the second interim report they have issued this week call attention to the fact that two-thirds of the pig meat consumed in the United Kingdom is imported, of which the value in 1928 was £48,591,277. If all this were produced at home, employment for 78,000 men in rural areas would be created, and the miller's offal of 6,000,000 tons of meat would be required for feeding the additional 800,000 breeding sows and their progeny that we would be maintaining on our land. Altogether it is estimated that 200,000 extra people would be employed if such a desirable state of affairs were ever reached. Even though it is unlikely that we should ever displace all pig meat imports, yet there is no impossible obstacle in the way of replacing the greater part of them. At present things stand at a deadlock. The curers complain that our multiplicity of breeds make the chief essential of a standard raw material an impossibility, the breeders complain that the curers do not give sufficient financial encouragement to those who will go to the trouble and expense of producing the right type of bacon pig. The paradoxical thing is that the countries who are cutting us out in our own bacon market came here to find the pigs to establish their standard herds and also to study the excellent methods of our best curers."

THE EDITORSHIP OF THE SATURDAY REVIEW

Mr. Gerald Barry wishes it to be known that, prior to the publication of this issue, he ceased to be Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

THE UNITED EMPIRE PARTY

NOT for many years has the political world of England been so stirred as by the formation of Lord Beaverbrook's United Empire Party. The ideal of Empire economic unity which it represents commands the sympathies of all men and the life-service of all the existing Parties. Already the new Party has attracted a considerable number of Liberals. The official Labour attitude is naturally hostile, but the reaction of the working classes to a policy which promises an effectual cure for unemployment is by no means certain. The farmers have hailed its appearance with enthusiasm, and the Conservative Party has been shaken to its inmost depths.

At the present moment considerable doubt exists regarding the real objects of the United Empire Party. By many Conservatives its creation is regarded with the greatest misgivings. In particular, its threat to run its own candidates at the next election is bitterly resented, and many voices have been raised in protest against a possible split in the anti-Socialist vote. Many Unionists who supported Lord Beaverbrook's crusade so long as it was confined to purely propagandist objects are unable to stomach the idea of a new party, and, regarding its creation as a stab in the back of Mr. Baldwin, have rallied round their leader with that traditional loyalty for which the Conservative Party is renowned. "Why," they ask, "cannot the ideals for which Lord Beaverbrook stands be realized within the framework of the Conservative Party?" "What substantial difference is there between the views of Lord Beaverbrook and those of Mr. Baldwin except that the former is impatient and the latter characteristically cautious?" "What good purpose can be served by the creation of a Party which can only win votes at the expense of Conservatives?"

We are far from belittling these apprehensions. Nevertheless, believing, as we do believe, that the great ideal of Empire economic unity is the only policy that can rescue the country from the disastrous position in which it now finds itself, and that this policy can only be put into effect by the Conservative Party, we are of the opinion that Lord Beaverbrook's attitude has been subjected to considerable misrepresentation. In no sense has that misrepresentation been more complete than in its attempt to stigmatize his campaign as a newspaper "stunt." His present policy is no new conception. He has advocated it ever since he entered politics. It was the reason for his opposition to Mr. Baldwin in the 1923 election, and in view of the economic disasters which have overtaken the country it is hardly a matter for surprise if to-day he has grown impatient. He has stated more than once that his Party is not a political party in the ordinary sense of the word. Its sole aim is the furtherance of Empire economic unity. For the furtherance of that unity he demands a free hand in all fiscal questions in negotiating with the Dominions and the Crown Colonies, and he has guaranteed that no Conservative, accepting this condition, will be

opposed by a candidate of the United Empire Party.

It is this question of the free hand which constitutes the fundamental difference between the views of Mr. Baldwin and those of Lord Beaverbrook. By his Coliseum speech Mr. Baldwin is pledged to impose no taxes on foreign foodstuffs. Lord Beaverbrook holds—and on this point it is hard to believe that the vast majority of Unionists, including Mr. Baldwin himself, do not agree with him—that without such taxes the whole fabric of Empire economic unity falls to the ground. The bulk of Dominion exports consists of agricultural products, and, if we are unable or unwilling to offer them a sheltered market in this country, there is no inducement for them to give us a compensating benefit for our own industrial products. This is not a matter of sentiment, but of plain business. Lord Beaverbrook maintains that, if Mr. Baldwin were returned to power on his Coliseum pledge, it would be tantamount to postponing any practical policy of Empire economic unity for an indefinite period. He is unwilling to accept this situation. He requests that Mr. Baldwin should take back or modify his pledge.

This is really the crux of the whole matter. Mr. Baldwin's views on Empire Free Trade are nebulous and ill-defined. Nevertheless, even if his beliefs are subject to many doubts, he believes in the ideal. The tax on foreign foodstuffs is the rock on which he and Lord Beaverbrook split. The gulf is a wide one, but we believe that it can be bridged. Mr. Baldwin has to choose between the small band of faint-hearted Free Importers in his own ranks and the support, not only of the powerful Beaverbrook-Rothermere Press, but of a man whose virile energy and ability have fired the imagination of the country. We confess to considerable amazement that Mr. Baldwin should have hesitated for so long.

It is said that Lord Beaverbrook has found little support among Unionist members of the House of Commons. In spite of the natural hesitation, which members of Parliament have shown, to swear allegiance to the new Party, there is already abundant evidence of a widespread sympathy with the Beaverbrook policy. The views of Mr. Amery, whose loyalty to Mr. Baldwin is beyond question and who has spoken his mind with commendable courage, are too well known to require recapitulation. There can be little doubt that they are shared by a large number of the rank and file. During the present week, too, the policy has gained a powerful adherent in the person of Sir Robert Horne. His return to active Parliamentary work at the present moment is particularly valuable, for he brings to a first-hand acquaintance with the Dominions a practical knowledge of economic questions. In his speech on Wednesday at the Constitutional Club not only did he refuse to accept the view that it is impossible to consolidate the Empire into one economic unit, but his whole speech was, in reality, a plea for the free hand in negotiation which Lord Beaverbrook demands. In view of such important pronouncements it is obvious that powerful influences are at work to induce Mr. Baldwin to throw over the Free Importers in his camp and to find a formula which will satisfy

Lord Beaverbrook and which will secure his support for a reunited party. We can only hope that they will prevail.

In giving our support to the Beaverbrook policy, we are under no delusions regarding its immediate feasibility. To persuade the electorate to accept a tax even on foreign foodstuffs will require a long campaign of education and intelligent propaganda, and, although it is precisely in this direction that the services of Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere can be of the greatest value, we are by no means sure that they will achieve the full realization of the policy they advocate. Nor can we view with equanimity the possibility of a split in the Conservative vote to which a too rash impatience may lead them.

On the other hand, the policy of Empire economic duty is a magnificent conception which must command the sympathies of every thinking man and woman. We are convinced that it has already received a far wider support in the country than the professional politicians would have us believe. It is a policy of action, and, as such, has made an instantaneous appeal to youth on whom depends the economic regeneration of these islands. We believe, with Sir Robert Horne, that it is a practical policy and that the time has come when we must re-examine our position. We believe that, when it is freed from the misrepresentation to which it has been subjected, it will meet with a generous response from all the Dominions. We believe that it is the only policy which can rescue us from that economic collapse of which, as we said a week or two ago, we are within a measurable distance. We cannot resist the feeling that the present policy of Mr. Baldwin is too passive and too ill-defined to achieve this all-important object.

To-day the Conservative Party is faced with perhaps the gravest crisis in its existence. As we have said, our sympathies are all for a policy of construction and action, and it seems to us the sheerest folly that a man of the practical genius and ability of Lord Beaverbrook should be allowed to drift away from the one party which is most capable of putting that policy into effect. We trust, therefore, that Mr. Baldwin will not be misled by timid counsellors, but that he will take his courage in both hands and heal the breach. The time has come when a great national effort must be made to rescue the country from the twin ruts of Safety First inaction and Labour extravagance.

UNCLE GEORGE

THE First Commissioner of Works lends himself to satire; apparently he can afford it, and he came singularly well out of the debate in the Commons last Tuesday. The criticism in *The Times* of his policy in the Parks was impressive enough, if only it had been right in its facts; but by the end of the debate most of them had faded away and the burly figure of Mr. Lansbury was left in sole possession of the stricken field.

On the minor charge of being like Uncle George, gazing benevolently on the children at

play and distributing goodies from his pockets, he must stand convicted; but on the major charges of felling noble elms, destroying vistas, of converting lawns into paddling ponds, of barging footballers into the peace of old ladies, and generally of converting the Royal Parks into Coney Islands, the verdict must be Not Guilty. One perfectly sound elm he may have on his conscience, but on the other hand, no lives lost through the falling of brittle branches; birds which love untidiness may have a grievance against him in the clearance of one of the islands in St. James's Park, but on the other hand, if women are to bathe in the Serpentine they will be obliged to him for his pavilion; and as for the footballers, they are too few and too restricted in the fields allotted to them to make much difference in an area so large. That the criticism has done good, by pointing out what Mr. Lansbury must not do, may be agreed. The Royal Parks must remain pleasant oases of fresh air and pleasant delusions of being in the country. They must not be overrun with strenuously competitive games and one must be able to enjoy the parks without doing, necessarily, anything at all. You may quite reasonably have one standard of enjoyment in suburban parks and open spaces, and another and quieter standard in the middle of the world's capital. But as criticism of anything that he has actually done, the enunciation of these principles is pointless.

Much was said in the debate by defenders of Mr. Lansbury about the need of more playing fields in London; this defence is unnecessary and, indeed, dangerous to his case. Golf may be well enough in Richmond Park, but in Hyde Park it would be an outrage. And so would football fields and paddling pools, if these were so numerous and obtrusive as to make it impossible to be at peace with the world in the park. When Mr. Lansbury interferes with the rights of the mere stroller and idler he must be pulled up sharply. We must, however, be quite clear about our ideas of peace in the park. Mere solitude is not peace. Nor, although a park must be a place where you can fancy yourself in the country, must we expect too much indulgence of uninterrupted vistas. After all, cottages, and even an inn, count among the charms of the countryside. The true ideal of a park in a great city is one in which an urban civilization can express itself in a new and more agreeable idiom. A farmyard would be as ridiculously out of place in Hyde Park as Bond Street in the middle of Salisbury Plain.

One of the drawbacks of city life for young people is no doubt the absence of playing-fields, but an even more serious drawback for young people is the scarcity of suitable settings for courtship. Several speakers this week were sensible enough to recognize it as one of the functions of a park to provide this setting. Mr. Lansbury is a broad-minded Puritan, and he has given it as his deliberate opinion that the love-making of the Parks is not a matter for police supervision. There are known bad characters on whom the police should keep an eye, but for the rest love-making is an indispensable part of the institution of marriage, and one for which parks should give decent and discreet opportunity. We hope that Mr. Lansbury will be in

office long enough finally to kill the old practice of prowling in search of offence.

Nor need we be so sensitive about permanent buildings in the Parks as some seem to be, provided that they are not numerous and harmonize in character with their surroundings. Not the least of the attractions of the Bois de Boulogne are the excellent and discreetly placed restaurants. We have made some miserable experiments of the kind in Kensington Gardens, but there is no rational ground for objecting to their extension. Why should London be the only capital in Europe in which all one's eating and drinking have to be done in hot rooms? Hyde Park is an urban institution and ought not to lack its elegant restaurant where, on fine summer nights, the people may drink in the open air and listen to good music. Why are there so few bands in the parks? Mr. Lansbury is right to think of the children in the daytime, and we hope to see him giving thought to the entertainment of their elders when their work is over. For that it will not be necessary to litter the park with buildings, and due regard will have to be paid to the elegancies. But there is an immense work still to be done. We do not make the best use of our parks; how can we with most of the space left to darkness and emptiness after nightfall? Hyde Park might be a blaze of light and still not be a Coney Island.

THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

House of Commons, Thursday

IN the House itself, the week has not been lively. Two days of Coal Bill Committee have yielded little of interest—so little, indeed, on Wednesday that, in preparation for the battle of this quota, the intervening clauses were disposed of by ten o'clock. For the rest, Government time was taken up with Supplementary Estimates, in which the most sensitive point was Mr. Lansbury's plans for the Parks. Lovers of London have perhaps taken fright unnecessarily and have not shown themselves at their best in so doing. There should be room in the Parks for a tennis court or two and even to swing a mashie. Nobody who knows Edinburgh, for instance, thinks that the beauty of that romantic city is marred because of a great open space near its centre; one part, after having been in earlier days the course of one of the oldest of our golf clubs, is still used for the game, though in a rather restricted form, and another, on winter Saturday afternoons, is alive with football matches.

* * *

Sir Edward Hilton Young's Bill for the preservation of Rural Amenities secured on Friday almost unanimous approval in debate and an unopposed second reading. Its path was made easier by the photographs of eyesores and monstrosities which its promoters exhibited in Westminster Hall, though even without those grim productions it would have had few enemies.

Yet it is significant of the complete urbanization of the national outlook that the æsthetics of rural England seem to raise a more real and general interest than its economics. If we are to survive as a great nation, the countryside must somehow be made to mean for the townsman more than a pretty picture

for his tired eyes. Even those, the roots of whose happiness are most deeply planted in the love of nature, should realize that rural England cannot be treated as a "museum piece."

FIRST CITIZEN

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EMPIRE

BY SIR CHARLES PETRIE

THERE has recently been issued the Report of the Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation and Merchant Shipping Legislation, but in spite of its importance this document has not attracted the attention it deserves, largely, no doubt, because of the coincidence of the Naval Conference and of other events of greater immediate interest. The Conference owed its origin to a recommendation of the Imperial Conference of 1926, and it held its meetings, which were attended by representatives of Great Britain and of the Dominions, in London during the autumn of last year. The importance of the Report lies in the fact that it will form the basis of the agenda of the next Imperial Conference, which is to meet in October.

It will be remembered that the last Imperial Conference defined Great Britain and the Dominions as "autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." Those who have drawn up the present Report declare themselves to have been guided by these principles, and they further maintain that their recommendations represent nothing more than the application of those principles to the constitutional status of the Empire. Whether such a claim can be substantiated is a question that can better be answered when the recommendations have been examined in detail.

So far as the power of the Crown in respect of the disallowance of Dominion legislation is concerned, the Report advises its abolition, and in this connexion it is to be noted that this right has not been exercised since 1873. The power of reservation, that is to say, the right of a Governor-General to withhold his assent to a Bill until His Majesty's pleasure is known, is also condemned by the Report, which thereby goes back on the pledge of the late Prime Minister, though an exception is made where the provisions of the Colonial Stocks Act are concerned, so that the powers of disallowance and of reservation are to be retained over legislation which may affect the original contract or the security for a trustee stock. Furthermore, it is suggested that any alteration in the law affecting the succession to the throne, or the royal style and titles, should require the assent of the Dominion legislatures as well as that of the British Parliament.

The object of all this, of course, is to ensure that no British Government shall in the future be in a position to interfere with Dominion affairs, though the fact seems to have been overlooked that the adoption of these recommendations would place the Crown in the anomalous position of retaining a veto over British, but not over Dominion, legislation. The suggestion as to any alteration closely affecting the monarchy itself is also not without its dangers, for it was the existence of just such a state of affairs as it is now proposed to establish that led to the suppression of the Scottish Parliament in 1707. Already there are protests from the Irish Free State

at the exception which it is suggested should be made in connexion with the Colonial Stocks Act, and the concessions enumerated above are likely to stimulate, rather than to satisfy, the centrifugal elements in the Empire.

The Report is also concerned with the restrictions imposed upon the Dominion legislatures by the British Parliament as well as those inherent in the Crown, and it recommends the repeal of the Colonial Laws Validity Act, suggesting that in its place it should be laid down that in future no law of the Dominions should be void on the ground that it is in conflict with either the statute or the common law of England. It further proposes to extend the powers of the Dominions in extra-territorial matters, while so far as the Merchant Shipping Acts are concerned it recommends the adoption of the modifications which have recently been urged by the Hon. J. G. Latham, the late Attorney-General of Australia. These, however, are technical matters, and have not the constitutional importance of the recommendations respecting the general legislative powers of the Dominions.

Enough has already been said to show that this Report, in spite of the almost casual manner of its appearance at a moment when the public attention is riveted upon other matters, is little short of a revolutionary document, and if, as will certainly be the case, its recommendations form the basis of serious discussion at the Imperial Conference in the autumn, it is essential that their nature, and the consequences of their adoption, should be generally understood.

In the first place, it is difficult to see how the adoption of the Report even in its entirety would meet the wishes of those who desire the sovereignty of the Dominions to be recognized. It is admitted that the British Parliament is supreme, and even if it were to divest itself of certain of its powers its supremacy would be unaffected, for if such measures as the Colonial Laws Validity Act can be repealed, so can the act that repeals them. Sovereignty, as the late Lord Oxford told the Imperial Conference of 1911, cannot be divided, and the passage of nearly twenty years has not affected the truth of that observation. The Dominions enjoy virtual sovereignty at the present time, but they can never have theoretical sovereignty so long as they remain part of the British Empire. In short, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that this Report, of which the two principal British signatories are Lord Passfield and Sir William Jowitt, is the result of some extremely muddled thinking, for it seeks to attain to an ideal which is *ipso facto* unattainable so long as the Empire is in existence.

In the pursuit of this wholly illusory sovereignty the signatories of the Report propose to sever the few remaining legal links which still bind the Dominions to Great Britain. It is by no means inconceivable, though happily not very probable, that one of the Dominions might enact legislation that some foreign Power considered to be inimical to its interests. If the recommendations of this Report were adopted the Crown would be unable to refuse its assent, though if hostilities were to result the burden and expense of defending the Dominion in question would fall principally upon Great Britain. It will doubtless be answered that Dominions have now too great a sense of their responsibility even to contemplate legislation of this nature. If such be the case, as it is to be hoped it is, then the retention of the veto can do no possible manner of harm, while its abolition can only make the Crown itself, as well as the Governor-General in each Dominion, an entirely superfluous piece of constitutional machinery, beside whom the French President would appear a veritable autocrat.

It is no argument to maintain that the recom-

mendations of this Report are based upon the principles that were officially recognized at the last Imperial Conference, for such is not the case. As has already been mentioned, Mr. Baldwin stated at that time that whatever changes might be made in the position of the Governor-General the right of reservation would still exist, and yet it is now suggested that this should be abolished. It is possible, as the signatories of this Report appear to have done, to take the definition of the position of the self-governing portions of the Empire a little too literally, for, whatever the legal status of Great Britain and the Dominions may be, so long as the former pays almost the entire cost of the Empire's defence she must exercise a predominating influence in its counsels, and it is as well that the theory should correspond with the fact.

In fine, the signatories have shown themselves bent upon establishing a uniformity which is neither practicable nor desirable. So far as their examination of the working of the Merchant Shipping Act is concerned, their analysis and most of their recommendations are doubtless extremely valuable, but on the wider problem of what may be termed the Imperial Constitution they are sadly at fault. They propose to deal a mortal blow at the prestige of the Crown, which is one of the few remaining links of Empire. They have not realized that sovereignty is indivisible, and they advise the enactment of legislation which would not effect the purpose that they have in mind. They have neglected the lessons of history in advising a return to the state of affairs which rendered possible the Scottish Act of Security. It is sincerely to be hoped that the Imperial Conference will not meet in October in the spirit which seems to have animated the signatories of this Report, but if it does, perhaps the early appearance of this document will ensure that public opinion throughout the Empire will be forewarned as to the danger of the centrifugal forces that are at work, apparently not least in the Cabinet of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

PONS POLITICORUM

By D. S. MACCOLL

WHEN politicians play Bridge it is others who have to pay, and the rate-paying, tax-paying public, which will have to find the millions, has reason to resent the apathy of a House in which so little concern is shown for the future of London. It has voted, with a large proportion of absentees, in favour of a scheme that would be tolerated in no other capital city.

The situation is this. The Ministry of Transport is the Government authority for road traffic. But whether under the late Government or this, it has shown itself impervious to a traffic which ought to have a previous place, the traffic of ideas. Rooted in the minds of the Ashleys and Mayburys and Morrisons is the conception of architecture as a trimming which is allowed to come in when the engineers have fatally compromised anything more substantial. In between those terms is the field of design, the foundation of good architecture, which is *planning*, and it is the ideas of town-planning, struggling with us for a hearing, to which they seem to be impenetrable. The department which has begun to occupy itself with those ideas is the Ministry of Health, and that department has been left out of account.

The Ministry, useless enough before as a guardian of design, has now virtually abdicated its place as a third player in the Bridge game, for Mr. Morrison, leader of the reactionaries of traffic on

the County Council, is now installed at Westminster. He has the reputation of a very brilliant debater and successful party chief, he is enthusiastic and has the best intentions, but these very qualities are a danger when their possessor is one of the two main obstructives in the sphere of traffic. Mr. Morrison is a fanatic of trams. Trams are obsolescent and doomed, unless in very ample boulevards; they are a death-trap and a nuisance in our streets, and in South London unescapable. But it was a desire for an extension of the system which was really behind the County Council's eagerness to pull down Waterloo Bridge. There was no other valid reason, and the weight of engineering authority was flouted in that discussion as the weight of architectural authority is flouted now. The other chief obstructive is the Southern Railway. Its terminals and viaducts are a blight on both sides of the river, and on the south side complete the throttling and squalor in which the tramways play their part. By the present scheme London is condemned for a further incalculable period to the indecency of bowels worn outside, over which she trips like a horse in the bull-ring. It would cost still more to bury the railways? Yes, and would be cheap in the long run, whereas the present scheme is extravagant for what it provides, and dear in the long run.

Mr. Morrison, in splendid isolation, is able to flourish one name, and that name, no doubt, considerable. Sir Edwin Lutyens is by general consent in the front rank of his profession, and I, for one, never pass without gratitude the little bank of St. James's Church, Piccadilly, which adds to the charm of an oasis in a thoroughfare that is being given over to the mechanized building of America. At Hampton Court, also, his new bridge promises to be well in keeping with its setting and agreeable in itself. But I cannot forget that in other instances there has been a curious, shall I say, light-heartedness in his attitude to conditions, and that among his gifts planning is not conspicuous. A minor example will serve as an illustration. I had occasion to go over, the other day, one of a number of houses he designed in a certain suburb. I had often admired, from outside, the proportions he had contrived for their front. But on going inside I found that a price had to be paid. The upper windows came down to the level of the floor. Now, apart from the awkwardness in bedrooms of so free an exposure, the raising of the lower sashes would mean risk of falling out and a broken neck for children, clumsy or forgetful people, and for anyone in the dark. In a word, the houses were not designed from inside outwards, but joined on to a predetermined façade.

To come back, however, to the Bridges affair, it seems to be forgotten that Sir Edwin was consulted by the County Council at a much earlier stage in this history, namely, as to a possible treatment of Waterloo Bridge, and that his proposals were so fantastic that they died at birth and nothing more was heard of them. He was again chosen, none the less, to advise about the Charing Cross scheme, in which the bridge is only an incident, involving, as it does, long approaches and a very complicated problem of planning. When the plans were at length revealed, I, in common with other admirers of Sir Edwin, rubbed my eyes, and we have been assuring one another ever since that he could not possibly have been responsible for anything so bad. The lay-out was not, it is true, quite so comic as the previous essays that had been put forward; there were some mitigations. These, we supposed, were all that Sir Edwin was responsible for, but we were sorry that his great name should be associated with the thing at all. Even when Sir Percy Simmons read out to the deputation an excerpt from a letter which Mr. Morrison repeated

in the House, to the effect that the "bridge and its approaches" would give an opportunity for distinguished architectural treatment, I said to myself, "Agreed! Sir Edwin pictures to himself a fine bridge and a composition on the south river front." But what, if anything, did he say about the other parts of the plan? And I am still curious to know if he made no reserves at all in the rest of the letter, because complete satisfaction involves approval of the amputated leg effect at the hither end of the bridge, or behind the façade of the other river front that mess of viaducts and tunnels that looks like an accumulation of piecemeal plumber's work. So far did incredulity go that in face of official assurances Mr. Arthur Keen, the modest and admirable Chairman of the Bridges Conference, wrote privately and ingenuously to Sir Edwin a letter of which Mr. Morrison took advantage in the debate, with all the indignation of a Pickwickian advocate. But we have now to recognize that Sir Edwin Lutyens is committed to the whole scheme, and will have the unenviable task of defending it in Committee.

For let it be clearly understood that the fight did not end with the vote on the second reading. The Bill has still to run its real ordeal, an examination, point by point, of its provisions so as to determine whether its "preamble is proved"; that is to say, whether it will secure what it sets out to do. The main tussle will take place over considerations of traffic, and on that head the Westminster and Lambeth Borough Councils are opposing. Mr. Morrison is convinced that the Ministry of Transport and County Council between them command the highest authority on road traffic. But of their wisdom the chief fragment so far vouchsafed is the contention that a discharge of the total flood of traffic into the Strand is better than a diversion of part of it on to the Embankment. His reason for this is the congested condition of Northumberland Avenue. The outsider who trusts his eyes rather than statistics in an office will be as little impressed by the argument in this case as by the old Waterloo Bridge calculations. Waterloo Bridge is doing very nicely without the six lines of traffic which were projected for a four-line approach.

The mention of Waterloo Bridge brings me to a very serious part of Mr. Morrison's deliverance. He definitely used the threat that if the present scheme were to be rejected the County Council would revert to the destruction and complete rebuilding of that bridge. Theoretically the Council might be within its rights in doing so, if the defeat of the scheme meant the abandonment of any bridge at Charing Cross. But that is not so. The necessity for a bridge at this point has been common ground for many years. The threat, therefore, is either petulant, or deserves an uglier name.

A LETTER FROM OXFORD

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

Oxford, February 26

THE new building at the S.W. corner of the Broad is now reasonably free of scaffolding and our pavements once more passable. It is quite a good building from the third floor upwards and the removal of a few medieval window mouldings and Potemkin pillars with effervescent summits would make it satisfactory as a whole. As these are stuck on like house-martins' nests, a resolute man could remove them in about ten days with a good pick.

There is little doubt that the rest of the Broad will be rebuilt during the next twenty years and little hope that its shops will not change from Nuremberg to Regent Street in appearance. Even should the forthcoming Bodleian Commission turn down the N.E. corner of the Broad as a site for extensions in favour

of something more radical in the Parks, as the competence of the proposed membership renders likely, its destruction remains inevitable. Age and the tremors of Oxford's lorries with their vagrant and unguessed-at cargoes have taken the decision on themselves. What can be done is to delay the rebuilding until Oxford architectural opinion is within, say, fifteen years of that of Amsterdam and then to go forward on a concerted plan using the Council's adequate coercive powers rather than the Preservation Trust's substitute of apologetic co-operation.

The question of examinations and especially that of the Honour Schools has been given a good deal of local publicity this term. But whereas the Schools have been attacked outside the University from a general point of view they are being discussed here purely with regard to detailed adjustments, which the entire lack of undergraduate interest proves to be no sort of solution. There is so little fear of Oxford becoming a Technical College and so great a likelihood of its examinations becoming altogether dominant that the position is worth thinking of more fundamentally.

There is little doubt that the generalized work of the present Honour Schools is unsuitable after the third or fourth term. An examination taken then would ensure an adequate background for the specialist and spur on the intellectually incompetent. The present Final Honour Schools might profitably be replaced by a thesis or by examination in a subject limited in scope, while the Passmen, whom intelligent treatment would almost eliminate, could be dealt with under the present Honour Schools plan. The sweeping character of such a change is by no means unjustified; interest in the various Schools has altogether died out and with it most undergraduate research work. As a consequence the standard of examination is raised, since it becomes safe to assume that the student reads nothing that the syllabus does not compel him to, while research work ceases to be distasteful and becomes impossible, engulfed in a syllabus. So the University degenerates progressively from a place of learning to a place of teaching.

Simply to lower the standard of examinations to their fifty-year-old standard to allow time for the specialization that then took place would be no solution. The modern undergraduate would do, as he does now, no more work than the syllabus compelled him to; he would, very sensibly, go to the cinema more often to fill up the extra leisure allowed him. Nothing is any use, except to construct a syllabus that stimulates interest and then allow outlets for it.

The present examination system produces men like syllogisms with their premises in India and their conclusions in Cheltenham. To those who love Oxford only because they see it attempting to superimpose on modern minds a reality contemporary with their own this may seem a small thing; to others whose youth is in the present and gives them no pathological bias it is disheartening to see the University maintaining its position in the modern world by little more than an exploitation of sentiment. If its spirit had not faltered there would be less need to insist on the letter of tradition.

An irresponsible computation of undergraduate debts to local shopkeepers at £250,000 has started several fat and lively hares. The debt probably amounts to somewhere in the neighbourhood of £100,000 and there is every reason against the University's interference with it. It is true that the credit system makes Oxford prices artificially high, especially in the case of tailors. It is true, also, that light-headed and impecunious young men occasionally ruin themselves owing to the ease of obtaining credit. But to set against that there are the great majority of undergraduates who learn from it to keep accounts and to go softly, together with

the smaller number of able and ambitious men whose adequate passage through the University would be impossible without this liberal extension of credit.

There are several minor matters. The use of aerodromes within 20 miles of Oxford by undergraduates is now forbidden by Statute, except for members of the University Air Squadron. This restricts undergraduate flying to 75 people who are interested in it from a military point of view. The regulation is unnecessary and as a precedent thoroughly unsound.

A new undergraduate journal, *Farrago*, apparently designed to take the place recently vacated by the *Oxford Outlook* is announced for the current month. The Senior Proctor is investigating the question of academic dress and the wearing of gowns, but is unlikely to arrive at any useful conclusion. Mr. Graham, President of the O.U.B.C., has resigned in favour of Mr. Tinne amid much publicity and a certain amount of obscurity. It deserves to be said that both his position and his rowing performance justified him in expecting a more extended trial than he received before being dropped from the University boat.

Finally—and by no means a minor matter—a scheme has been put forward which involves the conversion of Stratfield Brake, a small wood on the Banbury Road some three miles north of Oxford, into a Zoological Gardens and the erection of some three hundred houses near by. As the scheme is not yet fully announced but seems also to include an arboretum, several playing fields and a herbarium, it will have to be dealt with in a future letter. It has at present the air of a company for the importation of wild asses out of Spain.

LIGHT ON THE FILM TRADE

III—THE ANGLO-AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY

NOTWITHSTANDING a rise in prestige in recent years, the British film industry, to give it its courtesy title, is still a backward and fifth-rate concern. Its character may be described as provincial, timid, short-sighted and slow; its religion, worship of America; its policy, safety first. How difficult it is to compare this old-fashioned business, bonneted and beshawled, with the crude vigour of its modern contemporaries! In production we stand fifth on the list of the world's film-producing countries, the figures for 1927, based on latest available information, being as follows:*

United States ...	743
Japan ...	407
Germany ...	278
Russia ...	151
Great Britain ...	106
France ...	74
China ...	57
Austria ...	15
Denmark ...	10

Now the main obstacle to considering a British industry having a character, status, and self-supporting unity of its own is that it is not British, without character, and is obviously not a self-supporting unit. America is the brisk parent on whom it chiefly thrives, with odd, sometimes extremely odd, scraps of nourishment from the Quota Act. A glance at the total of sound and silent films available for 1930, amounting to 646, shows an overwhelming American production programme, for which the studios of Paramount, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Warner Brothers, the Fox Film Company, the Allied Artists Corporation and the Producers' Distributing Corporation are

* 'Report on Working Conditions in Film Studios,' International Labour Office (League of Nations), 1929.

chiefly responsible. Of the thirty-two members of the Cinematograph Renters' Society, the official organization of renters and distributors in England, ten are American, and have by far the largest interest in the British film industry. The American film industry, in short, with a total invested capital of £800,000,000, is the background to a British industry with a total invested capital of £70,000,000.†

This circumstance profoundly affects the whole of our studio and administrative policy, which is American in everything but success. America does at least know what she wants without asking anybody else. She has convictions in the matter, dearly bought in effort, study and pertinacity. Our studio executives never know what they want until they have asked everybody else. We have no courage because we have no convictions, no real independence of any kind, so that our "answer" to American enterprise on all matters affecting the industry at large is the merest pebble in Goliath's face.

The basis of the film business, allowing for proper financial support, is the studio, and the provincialism here, the poverty of ideas, the meanness and timidity, the wastage of time and money, the prostration before everything foreign, is so abject that statistics on the subject ought to be forwarded to America in the form of an "interest" picture. America would be impressed by the figures. Scarcely a week passes but one of our own trade journals warns exhibitors against some new imposition which ignorance or opportunism is about to launch upon them. The most recent was the engagement of a well-known continental actress by one of our most experienced directors for a talking picture dealing with the life of Beethoven. No sooner was the great enterprise announced than it was abandoned, following the payment, it was alleged, of an enormous salary to the players under contract. It was this very director who was compelled earlier in his career to hold up production of the British picture 'Nell Gwynne' while he dashed to the City to raise funds for the salary list! His extrication from the difficult position was regarded as a magnificent feat by the trade Press and was followed by honour and acclamation to the director concerned. That there was anything unusual in making a picture without proper financial backing never occurred to the peculiar mind behind the film industry. And 'Nell Gwynne' was a bad picture. Miss Dorothy Gish had to be paid £1,000 a week before she would appear in it.

It would be depressing (but not difficult) to multiply instances of this kind. Mr. C. B. Cochran, commenting a week or two ago on the unbusinesslike methods of the industry, is reported as follows:

Mr. Cochran called into question the business methods of our production companies . . . he asked [his Secretary] how many contracts with British producers they had gone to the trouble of producing during the past six months.

"I can't say how many," she replied . . . "They are too numerous."

None of them had come to anything, continued Mr. Cochran, although they had been drawn up by him at the request of our producers themselves.

At the last minute English producers had a habit of wanting to vary a contract. After all points had been agreed upon, and dates and terms of payment arranged, they would suddenly propose the payment of some infinitesimal sum, delaying any real revenue for the author for years, and would try and insert a clause which excused them even from the obligation to produce. (My italics.)

" . . . I have found my relations on this side very unsatisfactory," he added. "Yet I sold two plays to America and had no trouble at all.‡

It is, perhaps, hard luck on Mr. Cochran's relations to be exposed in this way, and still worse, perhaps, for them to be mixed up with American plays. Nevertheless, the interview states with fairness and accuracy the case against British production methods. That we could have had the talkies forced upon us without any regard for the vital adjustments necessary to exhibitors or any consideration for public taste, especially in music, is the measure of our strength in the film world. We behaved on this occasion like terrified children. Whether we wanted the talkies or not we dared not refuse them, since eighty per cent. of our product, according to latest available figures,§ still comes from America. It happens that the talkies have been a tremendous success and brought increased prosperity last year to the big exhibitor. (We do not hear so much about the small one.) The point is that we never had an opinion on the subject at all. When by chance we arrive at one we are instantly prepared to revise it in order to secure some temporary advantage or petty victory.

If criticism of this kind is frequent and destructive, that is because there is so much worthy to be destroyed. The assumption of the trade is that comment by those outside Wardour Street is hostile and ignorant, and I well remember how the deputation which awaited on Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister not long ago for assistance in the trade's affairs was thunderstruck that officials in Whitehall knew more about the business than they knew themselves. Why the deputation was not thunderstruck that they could not manage their own business has never been discovered.

Constructive proposals for "reviving" the British film industry have been made many times, have been discussed at general meetings, meetings of committees, meetings of the trade's official and unofficial organizations. And that is all. There is nothing new in these proposals nor is there any miracle attached to the making of good films. The real miracles are the bad ones—miracles of incompetence, such as 'The City of Play,' or of antiquated ideas, such as 'The Manxman' or of provincialism, such as 'Kitty.' Against these we must set 'Blackmail,' 'High Treason,' 'White Cargo,' 'Juno and the Paycock,' 'The Informer,' 'Shiraz,' 'Atlantic' and 'The Lost Patrol,' notwithstanding which, the editor of the leading trade weekly, summarizing the year's production, declares that "compared with the number and quality of the many American offerings, the above list" (seven of which I have omitted) "is hardly reassuring."¶

But the production of films of a specific national character, of a type peculiar to ourselves and striking to others, is one of the necessary tasks for the re-making of the film industry, its acceptance as British, its esteem abroad. The next thing is to spend a little money on the pictures we make. One of the big sets, in 'Atlantic,' for example, representing the ship's ballroom, is the same as that used for 'Cham-pagne,' one of the worst pictures Elstree has given us, and a year out of date. No wonder the scene looks more like the inside of the Strand Palace Hotel than that of a liner. Perhaps there is no difference between them in this phantasmic world! Similarly 'Elstree Calling' quite definitely looks a cheaply made picture. A revue, for example, cannot be made cheaply. Conversely, it is time the myth was exploded that a good picture must cost a fortune. 'Juno and the Paycock' cost about £13,000, or a little more than half the price of the average American programme picture. I believe that Mr. Anthony Asquith's 'Shooting Stars' cost less than £8,000; yet 'Tip-Toes,' made four or five years ago and of which little has been heard since, was said to have cost £42,000 and was a thoroughly bad

† 'Kinematograph Year Book,' 1930.

‡ Vide *Daily Film Renter*, February 19, 1930.

§ 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' 14th Edition.

¶ 'Kinematograph Year Book,' 1930.

picture. It is clear enough that money cannot take the place of brains, and that half our directors have about as much right to the title as the commissionaires standing outside the studios.

Are we also to believe that there is no acting talent in this country, except on the stage, or that it cannot be found? If there is none just now, that is largely because America has stolen our finest players from under our noses and made them world-famous. These actors do not need England any more. There is not, and has never been, a systematic search for talent in this country, and there is scarcely one actress on a British screen who would dare to "star" in an American feature production. Our policy with stories and production programmes is craven and conservative, and lacking in all daring and originality. Every excuse is advanced for exploiting an author with a name, whether he has a name for films or not. He "means something" to the public—a meaning which is now so clear that nine people out of ten take good care not to come within a yard of it. A super picture, as commonly understood, has never been made in England. We have not the money, the climate, the facilities, the actors, the directors, and so on. In plainer words, neither the brains, nor the vision, nor the staying-power. No English director would waste his time suggesting a theme of the scope of D. W. Griffith's 'Birth of a Nation,' made seventeen years ago, which proved a turning-point in the history of motion pictures.

It is sometimes said that when a patient has been seriously ill for a long time the best thing that can happen is for him to die. But not even death comes to the aid of the British film industry! It clings cheerfully to its ailments, moves about in pretentious state, and lunches at the Trocadero. The expense is enormous. Our remaining hope lies at Elstree, where a Scotsman, who has lived all his life in America and is virtually an American, had the vision to put the British film industry (with which is incorporated the American) on its feet. The industry still persists in standing on one leg and is constantly falling down. It will be a long time before it is firmly established on its two feet and the exhibitor can pocket the £8,000,000 which we paid last year in fees to American specialists.

V. S.

ON AUTHORITY

By MARTIN ARMSTRONG

OVER a quarter of a century ago I bought, secondhand, at David's stall in the marketplace of Cambridge, a rather battered little book by Mr. Chesterton called 'The Defendant.' I bought it for that trifling amount commonly known as "a mere song" and sold it a year or two ago for what, if I am to maintain the metaphor, I must style "an overture for brass band and kettledrums." There was an essay in it called, I think, 'On Useless Information,' in which the writer told of an acquaintance whose conversation consisted solely of an endless flood of perfectly useless facts, facts such as how much rust was scraped off the Menai Bridge in a year. Mr. Chesterton had been profoundly bored until the day when he discovered that the information was all totally untrue. No rust, in sober fact, was ever scraped off the Menai Bridge: that, and all the other dismal details, were exquisite fictions. Thenceforward Mr. Chesterton found himself entranced by the conversation of a person with a nimble and infinitely resourceful fancy.

When I went to school I began to take very kindly to Greek, but my instructors (it was not their fault but the fault of the system then in vogue) soon succeeded in raising so thick a screen of useless informa-

tion between me and Greek literature that my interest all but died. My energies were dissipated in learning what a Chiasmus, a Hendiadys, a Paraprosdokion were, which words demanded the oxytone accent, which the paroxytone, which the proparoxytone, which the others whose names, thank God, I have at last forgotten. I suspect that our masters were as bored and bothered by those accents as we were, for when I was in a hurry with a Greek prose I used to chance it and fling on a handful of accents pell-mell, using them merely as a kind of decorative camouflage, and I found that so long as the page had a reasonably bristling appearance, few remarks were passed on the precise position of the individual accents. To this day, when I so much as think of Greek syntax and Greek accents, a weight of boredom descends on me, not merely a boredom of the mind, but actually a physical boredom precisely located just above the pit of the stomach. But if it were to be discovered that those portentous words which concern Greek syntax and accents were really pure balderdash, that some aged and fuddled grammarian scribbling in his study had heard the experimental babblings of a child in the next room and had inadvertently incorporated them into his treatise, I should be entranced to the last degree. I would learn every idiotic word off by heart, I would have them inscribed and illuminated on parchment which I would frame and hang over my bed, and I would repeat them ecstatically to myself every morning in my bath.

Something of this kind once actually occurred. I can give no guarantee of the truth of what I am going to recount: it was told me many years ago and I have no doubt misremembered it here and there. But I can at least assert that it was told me by a fine classical scholar, a man now in Holy Orders, and that I, myself, solemnly believe it to be true. It refers to the larger Liddell and Scott, that formidable portmanteau of Greek words, each word with its vast array of references to Greek authors. During the creative agonies of Greek prose or verse, the ambitious boy would always look up an unfamiliar word, before using it, in the larger Liddell and Scott in order to make quite sure that he was using the purest classical Greek. If under the word he noticed references to Aesch., Soph., Eurip., or to Plat., and Dem., or any of the true golden breed, his mind was at once set at rest. He knew that his iambs would have rejoiced the soul of Sophocles, that his prose would have brought tears of rapture to the eyes of Demosthenes, had those writers had the good fortune to look it over. Now in my 'varsity days there lived alone, in ancient and dusty rooms in one of the last surviving inn-yards in Cambridge, an aged and eccentric scholar, Professor of Latin he was, called Johnny Mayor. In his capacity of Professor of Latin he used to deliver immensely learned lectures to a room which, except for my scholarly friend who, being a modest man, occupied one of the back seats, was completely empty.

Johnny Mayor was a great authority on Juvenal and vegetarianism, and in his astonishingly copious notes on the Satires, I am told (though I, myself, never ventured to look into them), that he took the opportunity to advocate with great force and persistence the merits of a diet of vegetables. What connexion this can possibly have with Juvenal I do not know, but I remember enough Juvenal to be sure that if he had not been taken to task for irrelevance he would certainly have claimed justification out of the mouth of Juvenal himself. *Quidquid agunt homines*, he would have replied, *votum, timor, ira, voluptas, gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est*.

But Juvenal and vegetables have nothing to do with my story, which is about Liddell and Scott. It occurred one day to this eccentric old gentleman, Professor Johnny Mayor, to look up some of the references to

the obscurer Greek authors quoted as authorities for certain words in Liddell and Scott. As his search progressed he became more and more interested, more and more gleefully absorbed. He went into the matter thoroughly, spent days, months, possibly years over it and he revealed the astonishing, the staggering, the delightful fact that hundreds and hundreds of these references are nothing more or less than red herrings. All those impressively abbreviated words, the formidable array of figures, were of no practical value whatever: they were purely decorative. If you took them seriously and looked them up, the words that they pretended to authorize, to legitimize, to seal, as it were, with the seal of nobility, simply weren't there. Perhaps Scott, exasperated by the meticulous cautiousness of Liddell, had in a moment of schoolboyish malice deliberately jumbled up all the figures; unless it was that Liddell, growing weary of endless verifiings and checkings and countercheckings, had taken the opportunity of Scott's absence at a luncheon party to accelerate matters by copying wholesale from older Lexicons which had themselves copied gratefully from older yet, so that through long centuries the delightful incoherence had grown until we possess now, in Liddell and Scott (or possessed then, for by now some disgusting pedant may have revised and corrected it all in a new edition), a priceless artistic treasure, innocent of the smallest taint of gross utility. And that is not all. Every boy, by that discovery, was released from the halter of authority. Thereafter he might follow his wild will, pitchforking into his Greek prose the loveliest and most unwarrantable words, until, to his amazement, he found himself writing not a dead but a living language, a language born of the imagination. Is there any wonder that Liddell and Scott seems to me now one of the most irresistible, the most deliciously reckless of works and that, when I awake feeling depressed, I set it open upon the breakfast table and pore upon it in breathless admiration until life becomes gay and beautiful once more.

A WORD FOR THE WISE

BY GERALD GOULD

MR. ARNOLD BENNETT recently handed out a few kind words to reviewers, who, being in the main an outcast race, more used to kicks than to halfpence, were appropriately grateful. But one thing he said, if I remember right, needs correction. He suggested that reviewers never get, or make, time to re-read the established masterpieces. For myself, I can only say that I have just re-read 'Northanger Abbey,' 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' 'Great Expectations,' 'Whom God Hath Joined,' and 'The Ballad of the White Horse.' I regard a constant reading of old masterpieces as part of my job; if I don't do it, how am I to know when a new masterpiece comes along? Besides, without that relief I should go mad. (Not that this, you may say, would be noticed in a reviewer.)

'Northanger Abbey,' which I have now read five times, in various moods and atmospheres, will surely not do. Its satire is thin, its construction is awkward, its very language is poor as compared with the admirable rich felicity of 'Emma' or 'Pride and Prejudice.' It will remain in a sense immortal, for the sake of its author, but it does not deserve to. 'Martin Chuzzlewit' I have read only four times: it contains, I think, the richest comedy in the English language outside Shakespeare: it contains also a terrible

amount of rubbish. 'Great Expectations'—how many times have I read that? I cannot remember, I recall only the first time of all, the winter evenings after school, the crouching over the fire, the shivering with excitement and shaking with laughter, the haunting horror of the hulks and marshes, the differences of opinion between Tickler and Pip. A book read in that glory can never lose its dearness; I go back and back to it, but never quite in cold blood. It always seems to me one of the greatest books in the world: it is certainly one of the most lovable. It does however contain—and even when I was a schoolboy I acutely realized that it contained—a certain amount of tosh. No matter! I do not skip the tosh in my re-reading. As for 'Whom God Hath Joined,' a work which has never received a tenth part of the praise due to it (I wish Mr. Bennett would make it the subject of one of his articles), it grows better every time. While in face of 'The Ballad of the White Horse,' I fall back on the language of Humpty-Dumpty: "There's glory for you!"

Through the minds of people who criticize reviewers, however, there does run a hostile implication, never put into words, never—so far as I know—omitted from thought: that, whereas it is fine and noble to recognize what a million people have recognized already, it is somehow presumptuous and absurd to recognize anything for the first time. One may call 'Felix Holt' a masterpiece, and still be reckoned a good boy: if one calls 'Ultima Thule' a masterpiece (though no sane and educated person could deny that it is an incomparably better book), one is a ghoul and a fool. Why? Simply because 'Ultima Thule' was published last year! I have actually had it said to me, by a distinguished editor on whom I had urged the claims of a contemporary work: "But that *can't* be any good! It's only just published!" This story is true, and the editor was serious.

There certainly is a difficulty, a discrepancy, an irreconcilable conflict, about reviewing. It is this. As the number of books in the world increases, as the number of *good* books increases, as there is an ever-growing intensity of competition for the fewer and fewer places on our shelves, the standards of criticism ought theoretically to be tightened up. We ought to judge contemporaries more harshly, not less, than we judge the giants of the past. And that is, for a number of reasons, impossible. It is impossible, because we should feel such brutes: it is impossible, because we should inevitably feel that we were being unfair. Moreover, though on one theory we ought to do it, on another theory we as clearly ought not. It is our business, not to blight the budding genius, but to bring it to fruition: to give to John Keats (if any), not his medicine, but his porridge. A little extra warmth of praise has never done anybody any harm: one cannot say the same for the chill of derision. Macaulay, it is true, genuinely thought it was his duty to demolish Montgomery; but he enjoyed himself too savagely at the task. I should believe in the duty more wholeheartedly if I were less aware of the enjoyment. And anyway there are so few Montgomeries.

Let it not be supposed that I am arguing for the infallibility of critics, or of the particular

critic who is writing this article. No man is infallible: and therefore, more obviously, no class of men. Judges are paid to be infallible; it is not for me to say whether they earn the money. Even murderers sometimes pick the wrong man, punters the wrong horse. What I object to is the constant, vague, general indictment, which has as a rule little relevance to specific error. That there are specific errors is admitted: what, after all, would you expect? But is it really reasonable to lump "reviewers" together for rebuke or castigation? Why not cricketers, or cooks?

Cricketers make ducks' eggs, bowl wides, miss catches. Cooks—too many of them—spoil the broth. But does one call a calling in question because of the occasional lapse of a practitioner? Well, one does—curates have had to take their turn, and doctors (at the hands of Mr. Shaw) their gruel. But there are good doctors for all that. Yes, and good curates.

The source of my complaint is doubtless human nature, about which I have had to speak sharply several times. The man who has been mishandled by a doctor forgets how often, by other doctors, or even by the same one, he has been assuaged: he vents a general indignation. And so it is, I suppose, that everybody who feels that he has ever been misunderstood by any reviewer—which is to say, everybody who has ever published a book—wants to throw a stone at the accursed caste. It is natural—but it is wrong. And, as a matter of fact, I can in this matter claim a personal superiority to the horde of stone-throwers. Perhaps it is the consciousness of living in a glass-house which makes me choose my sports with chariness: I do not want to bring that undesirable residence about my ears. But, for whatever reason, I am able to be misjudged and ill-used by individual reviewers, some of them asinine beyond belief, without wanting to abuse the whole tribe, I realize that the poor devils must live. I speak as one of them.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, though he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

WHAT ARE THE UNIVERSITIES FOR?

SIR,—Mr. E. M. Nicholson's brilliant and challenging article sent me straight to the book upon which it is a comment—Sir Charles Grant Robertson's closely packed little tractate on the British Universities. I found that unintentionally (on a second reading of his article I see qualifications which escaped me on the first) he had given me a wrong impression of Sir Charles's idea of a university. What exactly Mr. Nicholson means by calling it "behaviourist" I am not clear. Sir Charles Grant Robertson's account of the British Universities is based, it is true (how could it be otherwise?), upon a scientific study of their activities and upon what the behaviourists call their "responses to stimuli," whether the stimulus comes from new knowledge or from social need, or from the public opinion which is focused at intervals in pressure from Government. But Sir Charles investigates their "life history" in the light of their growth from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He is not only present-minded,

as the behaviourists would have him be, but historically minded also. He does not, like the behaviourist, discard introspection. Above all, he does not, as Professor J. B. Watson bids us, replace religion by experimental ethics.

His book ends, for example, with a passage (p. 75) for which Mr. Nicholson's article had been far from preparing me:

"Pray and work! . . . To the medieval mind the organization of a corporate society for the attainment of a Communion in Truth which did not include a Faculty of Theology would have been not only unthinkable but an unpardonable treason in the human mind and spirit as the interpreters of a spiritual and rational world. Is it not time that in every university we reverted to this fundamental principle and once more restored theology—*divina mater scientiarum*—to its sovereign place in the ordered hierarchy of knowledge, with the deliberate conviction that the results both for theology and the other sciences—or intellectual disciplines—will be a new and potent ally in the struggle of man to master Nature and himself?"

With this appeal, an appeal, as I understand it, that in the present crisis universities should take no narrow view of their function as places of thought and teaching, but should include the first and last things of human life and duty in their plans of study and in their discipline of the intellectual conscience, Mr. Nicholson will, I think, agree. And if he retorts that the need for making such an appeal proves the truth of his charge that "the universities have renounced their functions as custodians of civilization," Sir Charles Grant Robertson could reply that only four of the seventeen British Universities are without a Faculty of Theology or its virtual equivalent: that the absence of a Faculty of Theology is far from implying disregard of the fundamental issues of belief and obligation, or its presence a certain guarantee of those issues being continually kept in mind; and that the omission of theology from the faculties of four of the modern English universities was due to a dislike of denominational controversy, not to any reluctance to face truth.

But Sir Charles Grant Robertson's statement that the inclusion of a Faculty of Theology was a "fundamental principle" in the medieval universities is, I think, technically inaccurate. True, the background of all medieval studies was acceptedly theological, though many individual minds were sceptical and there was diversity of opinion and judgment within the limits of orthodoxy itself. But Salerno, the most ancient centre of scientific study and training in medieval Europe, was a school of medicine alone. It gave degrees, was accounted a *studium generale*, and was only in name not a university. The University of Bologna had no Faculty of Theology. The school of theology at Bologna had no official relations with the University. Alezzo had no Faculty of Theology, nor had Perugia, nor (at first) Salamanca or Coimbra. A medieval university without a Faculty of Theology was not deemed incomplete.

This and other facts show how difficult it is, and always has been, to give an answer to the question which Mr. Nicholson puts at the head of his article: "What are the Universities for?" Different ages, different countries, different cities in the same country, have answered the question in different ways. I doubt whether we can say more than that a university, or *studium generale*, must be a place of higher education with a staff of teachers both numerous and competent: must be open to students from all countries: must provide education in at least one of the higher faculties—theology, law, medicine: must address itself to the enlargement and dissemination of knowledge: and must, in recognition of these aims and characteristics, enjoy by prescription, or have received from a competent authority, a charter entitling it as a society to grant degrees.

These I believe to be the bare bones of the definition of the nature and purpose of a university. What clothes the bones; what aspect the university presents; what gives colour to its society, vigour to its influence, animation to its life, varies from generation to generation, from land to land. Very wide is the range of that variety. It embraces Cambridge and Wisconsin, Bonn and Paris, Johns Hopkins and Harvard, Toronto and Leeds. Their internal structure varies: not all admit undergraduates: some are collegiate: others only collegiate in part or not collegiate at all: some are independent of State subsidy, others in greater or less degree dependent on Governmental aid: in some, Government appoints able professors, in others none; in some, a few. The purpose of some of them is, in the words of the Oxford bidding prayer, "religious and useful learning": the purpose of others more secular, though not in spirit necessarily less religious. Their work to-day and always has shown how unreal is the distinction between a liberal and a professional education. A so-called "liberal" education may be narrow and sterile: a professional or technical element does not necessarily make education illiberal.

To provide, in one form or another, stages of liberal education for the right people—for the people, that is, who are willing to work for it and are competent to take advantage of its opportunities and to put what they gain from it to good use in the public interest is, I suggest, the purpose of a university. The fundamental question which we in England are now called upon to ask ourselves is, "What are the different kinds of liberal education which should be encouraged?" From this springs another question: What steps should the universities take to make sure that their influence encourages in the schools those different types of liberal education? Lord Eustace Percy, in his recent book, 'Education at the Crossroads,' urges the universities to look into this matter. And, from a slightly different point of view, Mr. F. W. Goodenough has shown cogent reason for such an enquiry. Mr. Nicholson's article is another sign that the English universities, old and new, would render a public service by reviewing their relations to the schools, both to the higher secondary schools and to the new types of secondary school which are beginning to fill a great gap in English education.

I am, etc.,

Oxford

MICHAEL E. SADLER

MURDER AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

SIR,—I read with interest the article on capital punishment. I think any power given to juries to find degrees of murder which would not be followed by hanging would result, in practice, in the abolition of hanging in a short space of time. This seems fully in accordance with our national habits of compromise and reform.

I am, etc.,

Clarendon, Sevenoaks

EDWARD PARRY

DUMPING

SIR,—Mr. Ryder's assertion that "the return given for wages paid is less in this country than in any other country in Europe" is so sweeping and so utterly incapable of proof that I do not propose to answer it. From the little I have seen of farm labour in European countries and the considerable amount I have seen of it in England, I would be strongly inclined to disagree with him—but that would be only a personal opinion and quite valueless. In his reference to the Wages Boards—which do not "regulate wages by Act of Parliament" but only standardize the rates agreed upon in the different districts between masters and men, safeguarding not only the men, but the masters also from undercutting by less scrupulous employers—there is something more tangible to go upon. I take it that he means that were it not for the

Wages Boards good men would be paid more, and inferior men less, than the present district rates. In practice I cannot help feeling that the inferior men would not be paid less, for in the absence of Wages Boards, there is little doubt that the Agricultural Workers' unions would be greatly strengthened and approximately the same minimum wages would be fixed, probably less amicably. Also there is a minimum limit that will support a man and his family, and the agricultural wage at the moment touches it. I submit that the labour that could be bought for less than 30s. per week would not be worth having. Dr. Ruston's recent investigations into farms that are making a profit show in every case a wage standard above the average.

As regards potatoes, I agree that the depressing influence of a surplus has a stronger psychological effect than figures would seem to justify. For this reason the English and Scottish surplus this year would have had the same depressing effect upon the market if every ton of foreign potatoes had been kept out by embargo. An unregulated surplus at home is just as much of a menace as surpluses dumped from abroad, and whatever be the remedy contemplated, I think Mr. Ryder will agree that the home producer would place himself in a much stronger position if he were to put his own house in order first. I refer in this chiefly to the sympathy of the public, which it is essential he should obtain. As regards remedies, there is hardly space to touch upon them. But I need not point out to such an acute observer as Mr. Ryder that Protection is no remedy to potato imports if they are really dumped in earnest. I feel, myself, that it would be far more satisfactory to trust in some form of self-organization by the entire trade to deal with this rather than put faith in measures which depend upon the whims of politicians and governments. I believe this to be not impossible, and that eventually means will be found to go even further and regulate surpluses by international agreement on a quota basis. It would appear to be only in spasmodic years of glut that these difficulties occur, for prior to the last two years the potato growers in Britain have been able to obtain very fair prices without attracting big foreign dumpings to knock the bottom out of the market.

I am, etc.,

YOUR AGRICULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

SIR,—With reference to your paragraph mentioning the agricultural resolution recently passed by the East Suffolk County Council, it may be of interest to some of your readers to know that similar resolutions have just been passed by the East Riding and Cornwall County Councils, by the Corporation of Bury St. Edmunds and by many rural and some urban district councils in East Anglia.

I am, etc.,

P. C. LOFTUS

SS. "Orontes"

PANEL DOCTORS: EXCESSIVE PRESCRIBING

SIR,—I learn that since 1927, when the agreement was made with the chemists whereby the Drug Fund virtually became the Druggists' Fund, the chemists have been liable to have their dispensing fees, but not their ingredient costs, discounted if the fund should be overspent. But in practice, for the year 1928 (the year concerned), so I am informed officially, the chemists actually received a bonus of 4.15 per cent., i.e., £4 3s. on every £100 paid to them as dispensing fees.

The suggestion that the fund as a whole was overspent is thus made to look rather silly. Obviously, to arrive at an average there must be figures above as well as below the mean line.

I am, etc.,

FRANK G. LAYTON

35 Birmingham Road, Walsall

THE THEATRE

BETTER THAN SHAKESPEARE?

By IVOR BROWN

The Dark Lady of the Sonnets, and Androcles and the Lion.
By George Bernard Shaw. The Old Vic.

Savonarola. By Max Beerbohm. Oxford Preservation
Matinée. The Haymarket.

AFTER the war there was a pleasant and a pertinent ditty which asked the question, "How are you going to keep them down on the farm after they've seen Par-ee?" And how, Miss Baylis, are you going to tie them down to the Bard after they've tasted Shaw? It was audacious to admit G. B. S. to the canon of the "Old Vic." His first appearance as a dramatist in that temple created a larger and livelier audience than the Shakespearean routine usually produces; this may have been partly due to the fact that the one-time giant-slayer was being honoured in the giant's particular palace. But I do not suppose that this argument counted for much; in any case the situation was not quite new. Has not Mr. Shaw delivered the Birthday Oration at Stratford, where every knee shall bow? Furthermore, how many of the audience ever knew of the anti-Bardolatrous campaign which found its topmost flight of denunciation in the SATURDAY REVIEW at the close of 1896? No, I should rather say that the Old Vic. audience is one of great natural piety. It dearly loves a hero or a saint and, as Mr. Shaw has now been canonized with public acclamation, the loyalists of the "Old Vic." were more than ready to bring the gifts of gate-money to the new shrine. It should sober Mr. Shaw's vanity, if he has any, to reflect that the really popular piece at the "Old Vic." is 'The Merchant of Venice,' which, even with Shylock and one or two passages of lyric beauty, is to me Shakespeare at his lowest ebb.

"He understood nothing and believed nothing." Thus ran the historic onslaught. By nothing Mr. Shaw apparently meant the politics and economics of the 1890's, and the famous article 'Better than Shakespeare?' is mainly a protest against Shakespeare's inability to put upon the stage an efficient Fabian lecture; the "making of a decent vestryman" was not to be found in the whole horde of his characters. Mr. Shaw would scarcely sign that article now; Mr. Frank Harris, a passionate and sensitive, if wayward, Shakespearean, must have printed it with considerable regret that so brilliant a critic should have so totally failed to recognize that dramatic poetry is not necessarily the same thing as lecturing or leader-writing. Shakespeare worked in a community where individualism was gloriously puissant, where lecturing was unknown, and politics the concern of a few. In any case, the dramatist dared not play leader-writer; his position was hazardous and the smallest touch of political innuendo might involve his company in disaster. But we live in an age of prose and politics, of lecturing and leader-writing, an age which will not tolerate poetry upon the stage unless it is forced upon us as a classic. Mr. Shaw is deservedly the idol of the hour, for he has used the stage as platform with incomparable wit, lucidity, and vehemence. And, because our age prefers ideas in prose to emotion in verse, because it is hungry for creed and doctrine, of which Shakespeare had little and Mr. Shaw has much, it seemed to me extremely dangerous to permit the "Old Vic." public a taste of Mr. Shaw. I fancy it will now be harder than it was to find an audience for the man "who believed nothing." If

only Shakespeare had written 'Othello' with the announcement, "I now propose to state and solve the colour problem"! But he did not. He was an artist interested in individuals, not a publicist banging down plank after plank for a Progressive Platform.

'The Dark Lady' is a silly squib, but Mr. Shaw's wit makes it crackle. If there is anything unique about Shakespeare it is his gift of phrase; his genius for the use of words is as distinctive as anything in the course of all literature. To pretend that he went about as a picker-up of other people's stupendous iambs is to put a preposterous faith in the democratic dispersion of genius. However, the little piece does good in the world, particularly at the "Old Vic." For it stages the Bard as a witty and a wanton man, and not as the gifted but impeccable ratepayer of the authoritative Lives. I thought that some of the "Old Vic." audience, nursed in adoration and schooled on Lee, might start a riotous protest, and I am happy to relate that there were no scenes. Bardolatry is coming to its senses. 'Androcles' has always seemed to me a delightful piece of theatre, tempering the platform-stuff with the pantomime. Shakespeare could never have created Lavinia or Ferrovius, for, though the judgment that "he understood nothing" is ludicrous, there walks in these characters a philosophy outside the Elizabethan range. But he unconsciously provided for the Christian martyrs awaiting their lions, a statement of faith and valour for which no superior in simple brevity is conceivable. I allude to the speech of the recruit Feeble, in which amend prince to Master:

By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death; I'll ne'er bear a base mind; an't be my destiny, so: an't be not, so; no man is too good to serve 's prince; and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year quit for the next.

Better than Shakespeare? Let Mr. Shaw look to it. I should add that the acting was excellent. C. E. Montague once described how Mr. Shaw's text can ride a team of players as a jockey of genius rides a sluggish horse. I do not accuse the "Old Vic." team of sluggishness, but it was good to see how happy their new dramatist made them.

The Haymarket matinée, arranged by Oxonian writers and actors for the Oxford Preservation Trust, brought to the stage some dreadfully feeble stuff, but I know that the organization of these affairs is the very devil and that those who attend the charity drama must come with charity in their hearts. There was, however, a very bright spot. Sir Nigel Playfair introduced Mr. Max Beerbohm's 'Savonarola' to the public theatre and the result was an excellent half-hour with inspired mischief. Nothing is easier than to burlesque the Elizabethan drama; its mixture of convention and ferocity, of logic-chopping clowns and sky-aspiring verse, may be said to sit up and ask for it. But Max is far too subtle to be content with merely mobilizing the songful clown and the maniac heroine. He is continually refining his jest with the sweetest touches of diction and scansion; it is just as though an over-worked Shakespeare was turning the stuff out to time by using every trick in his work-basket. The verbal finesse does not quite "get over" on the stage, where the preposterous pantomime is more effective than the pastiche. But 'Savonarola' was a great success and gave quality of wit to an afternoon which otherwise was a desert of dullness.

Sir Nigel read the admirable stage directions and the cast was splendid in its efforts to suit the concerted action to the ludicrous word, Mr. Reyner Barton being particularly ingenious in this form of nonsense. Mr. Clarke-Smith's Savonarola had a beautiful gravity with the ludicrous just peeping through, and a large company maintained the right policy of not burlesquing

the piece too heavily. It would be easy to sabotage the entire quality of the jest by playing for the guffaws of the less judicious. Sir Nigel properly forbade that licence. Mr. A. P. Herbert's appearance as Dante was, as they say, much expected. Mr. Herbert's delivery of Shakespearean heroics is not yet as noble as his delivery at skittles, but he seemed splendidly aquiline and was manifestly eager to please. He did.

ART

MR. SICKERT AND OTHERS

By WALTER BAYES

MR. SICKERT is again very much "on the town." On Wednesday evenings he is lecturing at the Westminster Art School. At the Guillaume Gallery he compares with Messrs. Augustus John, Matthew Smith, Duncan Grant and Paul Nash—at the Savile Galleries, with himself, and it is the latter comparison which is the more disquieting. It is not that his later work shows a falling off in quality when it is done on equal terms with the old. The comparison becomes more dubious, however, in the case of pictures done (with due acknowledgments) from engraved designs by early Victorian artists like John Gilbert, Weir, H. French or "Georgie" Bowers. There can be no questioning the legitimacy of these essays, or the charm of that loyalty to the glamour of the artists' youth which lavishes so fine a talent in rescuing designs, the merit of which lies forgotten in early numbers of *Good Words* or other similar publications, but I have sometimes wondered how, after all, these collaborations would stand comparison with the "hundred per cent." Sickerts. Now that I have seen them together I have no hesitation in saying that, to my mind, they do not stand that test—quite, though the spirited dramatic treatment of No. 26, 'The Seducer,' or No. 18, 'Collaboration,' seems to justify the practice—seems to until you compare them with No. 15, 'Good-night and God Bless You,' or the design, as furiously dramatic yet somehow more a passage from life and less from the theatre than the Gilbert Paraphrases—'Lazarus Breaks his Fast' (No. 7).

Few artists, even in the post-war period, would have read the biblical narrative with this ferocious acceptance of the inevitable fact that Lazarus had been so many days in the tomb without food and that he would be correspondingly hungry; would have assumed him thus as a Jew of coarse appetite, and realized that the first thing his affectionate relatives would do would be to set him at table—Lazarus, the artist would assure us, must have had the time of his life. Yes, they must have done him very well—his sister had been a thriving courtesan, they must have been very well-to-do. The artist has taken himself as model, but with red hair, a nose which already flames from the excitement of the debauch. A cruel caricature, following on the previous discovery (No. 28, 'The Servant of Abraham') that by stressing the character of the "man who understands the commercial side of Art," which he frequently affects, he could turn himself into a rather formidable Jew. This portrait (No. 28) is an excellent rendering of one of his favourite impersonations, but is not, of course, in the least like the real Sickert, the delicacy of whose expression that impersonation never for long conceals.

It is this histrionic side of his talent, an important part of his outfit, which is mainly called into activity by the attempts to revive episodes of Victorian life of which I have been speaking. He has not, as yet, brought to the service of his admired illustrators of the 'seventies and 'eighties the full measure of his

sensibility to light and atmosphere, his power of getting so absorbed in the mystery of dimly light interior that mere nothings—the huddled back of a woman in shadow, the sag of a coat on a peg—take on historic solemnity. He has not yet painted (though, of course, he may) these excerpts from the scrapbooks of the last century as he paints the lovely 'Evening Primrose' (5) or 'Baccarat' (20) at the Savile Galley, or the perhaps finer 'Reflections' (13) at the Guillaume Gallery. To produce so poignant an effect as this last by such simple means is mastery.

It is, I think, the one I most delight in of the Sickerts now showing in London. Of the other artists represented at the Gallery, Messrs. Grant, Matthew Smith and Paul Nash appear somewhat in that order of importance. All are artists, all have been seen more favourably. Mr. Grant's large 'Vineyard in Provence' (10) is courageous and capable but obvious, and suffers from a bad patch of cloying colour in the distant sea. Mr. Matthew Smith has passages of great virtuosity in 'The Red Chair,' with its riotous bouquet. Mr. Nash is inclined to experiment with rectilinear subject-matter with results which are not so satisfactory as one might have hoped—rather because of the thin shapes he prefers. If these artists deserve some public attention, we need not seriously challenge the verdict which accords to them less than to Mr. Sickert. Mr. Augustus John, the remaining exhibitor, enjoys a reputation probably more widespread than does Mr. Sickert and it is doubtful if the latter can ever challenge it in certain quarters.

The other day I was one of those who sat out (with much satisfaction) the full performance at the Court of Mr. Shaw's 'Man and Superman,' and I was much struck in the "Hell" scene by the way in which an outrageous "hole" in Don Juan's argument seemed to be accepted as a matter of course by a nevertheless cultured audience. It may be remembered that Juan, after dismissing as valueless the guidance of Religion and Science, treats at first the artist with some politeness: with him he had, for a time, he admits, much Pleasure and Profit. "But he led me to Woman," he exclaims, and proceeding to point out that "Woman" turned out something of a disappointment, he dismisses the artist also as though what art could do for him necessarily was settled at the same time. No one in the audience seemed amazed at Mr. Shaw's astounding assumption. For thus he accepts the view of the popular journalism of the day which, at bottom, considers the artist as a kind of refined "go between," recommending with expert knowledge this or that type of beauty as a stimulus to gallant susceptibility. A large proportion of the prose consecrated to the Italian Exhibition, the perennial popularity of the English eighteenth-century portrait painters, finds its inspiration in the same assumption.

Now, neither of Sickert, nor Grant, nor Matthew Smith, nor Paul Nash can it be said that they "lead us to Woman." Of Mr. Augustus John the statement might plausibly be made, and it is in gratitude at finding, for once, an artist of repute who thus confirms their conception of what he ought to be like, that journalists, after a short spell of protest because he was not sentimental enough, have acclaimed, and continue to acclaim, him. It is inevitable that among the works of such an artist a portrait like that of the 'Marchesa Casati' (15) should be a popular one, but I submit that it is really unworthy of Mr. John's talent. When the scientific criticism of the twenty-first century gets fairly at work on the art of this one, internal evidence will probably lead to its being ascribed to Miss Elinor Glyn. She also leads us to Woman, but I have usually regarded Mr. John as the more distinguished artist.

At the Leicester Galleries the large collection of the work of Emile Antoine Bourdelle confirms a previous impression that he was a first-rate theatrical sculptor.

He had a fertile imagination and, in an exuberant baroque fashion, a sense of style. Within the limits conveyed by that adjective, more sense of style than Rodin, whose modelling his own often resembled, though without the occasional saving humility of the older artist. He had a better sense of physical poise and gesture than of character, his gigantic busts being, as a rule, those of his works in which the epithet of theatrical might be applied in its less flattering sense. Witness the 'Beethoven' (36) or the really pretentious 'Rodin' (24). He was a true Southerner and had an abundance of plastic ideas. That he should have achieved so much official success marks a superior understanding of sculpture in France compared with which obtains here. The Alvéar monument for Buenos Ayres seems not unsuited to the country of its destination, where a certain over-emphasis might not be unpleasant. Grandiose, if not quite great, it resembles the Colleone statue at Venice rather than the Guatemala at Padua.

BROADCASTING

SIR JOSIAH STAMP and Mr. Maynard Keynes were, in some way, unhelpful in their discussion on Unemployment, though the fault (be it said without condescension) was at this end of the wave. Alternately the speakers were dazzlingly incomprehensible in the use of abstractions far beyond one's mental range, or ironically dispiriting when they got out of each other's depths. The general menace of the problem was unrelieved by this discussion, one's mind being as much a blank, or a chaos, as before. But there is something to be got from gazing at stars, some comfort in realizing that as they scintillate, and crash into one another, the system undergoes some slight, possibly beneficent, alteration. That Mr. Keynes can prophesy that population will go on increasing only as far as 1940, by which time birth-rate and death-rate will equalize, must have astonished listeners. And there were other points to make one think: the cost per head of the social services now and at the beginning of the century, the annual loss to-day caused by unemployment.

Sir James Jeans's Point of View came up to my expectation. Listening to him, I remembered Professor Eddington's National Lecture, and my envy of a man who could deal with assurance in vast matters. Sir James Jeans is the same type of luminary. The term seems peculiarly fitting to one whose knowledge of the heavens is renowned. Here he touched on many more subjects than cosmogony, things nearer to our own lives. It was a stimulating occasion.

Saturday gave examples of the limitations under which relays from theatres suffer. 'Iolanthe' had encores (not as many as in the past). Anyone who values unity of production and continuity of action on the stage dislikes encores in the opera-house, but over the ether an encore is null. The Vaudeville that evening was made almost unintelligible by applause continually covering the best hits of the comedians. Sunday's music was something to recall with gratitude. Miss Gerhardt's singing, though not best suited by a microphone, was wonderful art, and Mr. Angus Morrison's playing of the Grieg pianoforte concerto made that hackneyed work live with an unusual grace and warmth.

A selection from programmes for the following week. (London and Daventry, unless otherwise stated.) Monday: Dame Smyth's Point of View (9.20). Tuesday: Bishop of Plymouth on 'The Class System' (Plymouth, 7.0). Mrs. Mary Adams on 'Pioneers of Health' (7.25). Discussion on 'The Family' between Dr. Crichton Miller and Mr. C. A. Siepmann (5GB, 8.30). Wednesday: Professor Gilbert Murray on 'Intellectual Co-operation' (7.25). Thursday: Miss Margaret Kidd on 'House Letting' (Scotland, 10.45 a.m.), Sir John Cadman on 'Petroleum' (5GB, 6.40). Friday: Mr. Desmond MacCarthy on 'The Ideal Spectator' (7.25), Mr. T. S. Eliot on 'Seventeenth Century Poetry' (5GB, 8.30). Saturday: The Director of Programmes on 'Alternative Programmes' (9.20).

CONDOR

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—209

SET BY HUMBERT WOLFE

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem in not more than 25 lines entitled, 'The White Peacock of the Lake Argues Against Colour.'

B. "To achieve the age of 30 is to have failed in life," said Saki. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for proof of this in not more than 250 words, with or without reference to Mr. Beverly Nichols, Mr. Evelyn Waugh, Mr. Michael Arlen and Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

RULES

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 209A or LITERARY 209B).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of the rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, March 10. The results will be announced in the issue of March 15.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 207

SET BY IVOR BROWN

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best sets of 'Stanzas written in Dejection near Maple's.' No affront is meant to the furnishing house of that name, the theme being merely such thoughts and emotions as may be aroused in the poet by the Tottenham Court Road. There is no need to imitate Shelley either in mood or measure, but pastiche is not ruled out. The length is limited to thirty-two lines.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best observations of Mr. Pepys of the Navy Office on the Naval Disarmament Conference. Length not more than 250 words.

REPORT FROM MR. IVOR BROWN

207A. Furniture-polish appears to be a great lubricant of poetry, and there were abundant lamentations from those who wished to purchase but could not. Some were even so polite and honey-tongued about the Tottenham Court Road and its wares that it was a case of suites to the sweet. But dejection was a necessary condition and so was some reference to the locality. There were several pretty flutings of urban despair which lacked this local habitation and might have been composed in Chicago or Cracow. In this category H. Herklots and R. Hartman wrote charmingly, but those who kept more closely to the subject must have precedence over them. The T. C. R. is not all furniture, and I was glad to have allusions to other matters as well as sideboards. N. B. ended up at "The Horseshoe" and sought to drown bitterness in bitter, and I heartily agreed with this of E. C. Hale:

Why did I ever leave my home,
Lured by a cheap mid-week Excursion,
Sir Arthur Yapp's Palatial Dome
Fills me with a profound Aversion.

H. C. M. ended strongly with :

And all the demolishers of Britain's beauty spots are
determined that the fungus
Known as Tottenham Court Road shall remain among
us.

I liked R. Graham's backward sentimental glance, and honourable mention goes as well to N. B. and a completely anonymous bard who permits himself neither address nor pseudonym and begins with pyramids. After much hesitation I have selected Oisin (name and address, please) for first prize and Gertrude Pitt for second. Her rhymes are strange, but my reading of modern verse convinces me that many things forbidden are now blessed with such authority as this age possesses. Miss Pitt has seen many phases of the Road and, though she has just missed the bus for 'Follow Through,' now replaced by 'Silver Wings,' bus-missing is surely a just poetic licence.

FIRST PRIZE

I pass into the brimming Road
Half-dazed, from out soft Sladian air.
Here Art is courted too, hath flowed
To tint the pot, to print the square,
To shape the Jacobethan chair,
And fill with down each massy bed,
And roll the waves of Lino there.
Do I rush by then? hide my head?
Not so, I creep to gaze and gaze instead.

Alas! no mind have I to sneer,
Slade though I be, or tilt the nose
At aught of all enwindowed here,
Nay, my very heart leaps out to those
Neat suites complete at Soanso's—
That box-divan, that curb, yon tray,
These rugs and puffs for weary toes
By gas-blue log at close of day.
Entranced, I standing, yearn my soul away.

Pass on there: ay, the shutters clash,
The dream is done, I pass along
Mildly despairing, void of cash,
Crushed by the happy homing throng.
Bright kettle, could I call your song
Mine, by that purpled hearth, at tea
I'd ne'er lament if tones were wrong,
Nor look for Art, so blest I'd be.
Good night dear Road of Homes too dear for me.
OISIN

SECOND PRIZE

O radiant spoil of Samarkand,
You could transform my humble room:
Methinks no silk or woollen strand
Supplied the Persian's magic loom,
But fallen rainbow, flower bloom,
Or dust of sapphires were his staples.
Well—Shelley felt a certain gloom,
Despite the loveliness of Naples,
And I, dejected, leave behind the rug at Maples.

Thus prose puts poetry to flight,
Finance must my desire subdue.
The frequent cinemas invite
My patronage for pictures new
And stories old: in vain they woo;
No thought of love or crime elates me,
I tarry not to "Follow Through,"
When such a problem grim awaits me—
Shall I permanganate my boards or call on Catesby?

I watch the passers-by: they seem
As listless as the Winter day,
Untouched by ecstasy or dream.
If they had seen me scan and weigh
The merits of those rugs, and play
With Fancy for an hour's full girth,
And known what I had to pay,
I think it would have roused their fool-mirth—
And now I'll go and buy a little mat from Woolworth!
GERTRUDE PITT

207B. Pastiche, where the original so abounds in mannerism as does the diary of Mr. Pepys, should be easy enough. But competitors are determined to be poets, and St. James's Palace (with prose demanded) drew far smaller numbers than the Tottenham Court Road with verse as vehicle. The entries fell into two classes; one party forced modern terminology on Mr. Pepys and led him into statistical detail. Of these dealers in tonnage and poundage Seacape was the best, but the method is scarcely adaptable to Pepysian English and one feels the jar of "Their latest ship (submarine), the *Surcouf*, is a great fine ship of 2,800 tons." Those who abandoned all effort to be topical in the detail and limited topicality to the theme, succeeded far better. Admittedly their task was easier, but it produced four extremely neat pieces by Valimus, W. G., Non Omnia and Cuniculus. The prizes go to the first two.

FIRST PRIZE

February 20. To the office, at my alphabet of contracts and at a fine modell of a shipp latelie found there. Come to me two wenches from the conference newlie made in London on the Navie, who bring me letters, but they being mighty pretty I show them the shipp, and (God forgive me!) make a shift to talk with them an houre. They much taken by the games and playes and lollipops of the towne and hope there be no quick settlement of the shippes, which, God knows, I trust also, it being like to turn to my misfortune. But I, thank God, master of £2,000 last new yeare, though my wife (poor wretch!) in want of a silk dress, which I will not give her till I see R. MacDonald to know of the French, and what shall become of the shippes that go under the sea. Much talk in London of lessening the Navie and of lawes for battle, but I pretty merry to hear them waste so much breath. Lord! that men should spend so much time and wealth for nought, for God knows they will not keep their lawes in warr if it befall. So I home, and trust that good will come of it and I none the poorer. My new tabby vest come, costing me nigh £15, and I to my wife dressed in it, mighty fine. But she sulky; and after drinking my jocolatte, I to bed pretty fuddled.

VALIMUS

SECOND PRIZE

To-night, at Mistress Knight's, Lord X very high at the Almaines' building a new frigate which is thought better than any ship of the line of the French, or ours either. Being weary of the fool, home to my dear wife, who, it being not yet ten of the clock, made much of me. So to bed, but could not sleep, but lay a-thinking of the many men and ships we had lost to save the French, and how in France, so Sir W. Penn did tell me, a man might walk for miles, and each step be on the bones of an Englishman who died fighting for the French. And now that we have destroyed German William's fleet and army for them, these same French must set themselves up with a bigger army than ever, and do steadfastly refuse to abate one jot of their fleet, although no enemy. This, I thought, is just what German William did. I pray God the upshot be not the same. But nothing, it seems, will lessen the pride of the French, who a few short years ago were crying to us for help. Which is mighty strange!

W. G.

PAST AND PRESENT—XVI

THE appearance of a handsome edition of 'The Prince' (Moring, 10s. 6d.), in a version by Edward Dacres, sets me musing on the fate of a man of genius, a pioneer investigator of the problems of statecraft, who has been invoked by a thousand for one who has read him and read by ten for one who has seriously endeavoured to understand him. The political changes which seemed to antiquate much of the most obvious part of his teaching, the hostility of the Church of Rome towards a writer who had sought to liberate the State from all ecclesiastical influence, the moral censure which he in part deserved, the difficulty of grasping his real drift without an informed and imaginative conception of his transitional period: all these told heavily against his chances. But, after all, during the eighteenth century there was some reaction in his favour in Italy; his almost complete works were at long last issued near the end of that century; and his native Florence erected the monument which bears the terse inscription, *Tanto nomini nullum par elogium*. It is strange that we should have had to wait another forty years, three centuries from his death, for any comprehensive and discriminating treatment of the man and his work.

Those who do me the honour of listening to this table-talk will not by now suppose me an enthusiast for Macaulay; but, little as I love his cocksureness, his zeal for lucidity at whatever cost to the finer truth, the mechanical element in his style, I feel a certain indignation that he never receives credit for his truly remarkable essay on Machiavelli. To be sure, Macaulay was still himself in that essay, which is descriptive rather than critical, and which suffers also from his usual determination to simplify the matter under discussion to the needs of a style without nuances. But it is the first study of Machiavelli in which, however rapidly, something like the whole ground is surveyed, and the tribute to Machiavelli's patriotism is a highly courageous and eloquent piece of writing. Except for a few remarks by Ranke and by Heinrich Leo, known to me in this connexion only through Villari's summary, nothing worth ten minutes' consideration had been written on the subject before Macaulay; and the crudity of Macaulay's treatment of the moral problem raised by 'The Prince' does not detract from the value of the rest of the essay.

Since then in England, so far as is known to a reader whose inclinations generally take him to the study of æsthetic, not political questions, we have had little of importance. Morley's sketch is rather thin and prim, but it contains one passage of rare excellence; I quoted it months ago, in one of the 'Back Numbers,' as the very best prose the somewhat overrated Morley ever wrote, but I will quote it again for the light it throws on Machiavelli's highly idiosyncratic style:

He uses few of our loud easy words of praise and blame, he is not often sorry or glad, he does not smile and he does not scold, he is seldom indignant and he is never surprised.

A long while ago, but I cannot remember quite when, we were given through the Oxford University Press an edition of 'The Prince' with a valuable Introduction by Lord Acton and abundant scholarly annotation by another hand. We have also had an English translation of the monumental Pasquale Villari, whose reading is vast and temper judicial, and who is nowhere really dull, but who is hardly

an artist in biography. And there have been many specialized studies, notably some of the effect of Machiavelli on Marlowe and the Elizabethan dramatists in general.

It was by way of those dramatists that I came to Machiavelli, and I confess it because I suspect that approach affects one's judgment of the Florentine. It is apt, I think, to have this among other consequences, that one conceives of Machiavelli as more of a virtuoso in statecraft than he was. Unhindered by much first-hand knowledge of his actual writings, one sees him responding to the challenge of difficulties rather in the spirit of a solitary chess player who imagines an opponent and enters on the contest for sheer pleasure in the exercise of skill. In a well-nigh hopeless position, Black is to mate in the least possible number of moves. But though he mostly prefers Black, he is not so immoral as amoral, and will play White on suitable occasion.

Now, there is this much truth in such a view of Machiavelli that he often is neutral and merely concerned to examine the means other men have successfully used to their ends. And, indeed, or so it now seems to me, Machiavelli was the discoverer of a very dangerous truth: that, given a fortunately rare detachment, the statesman may so act, now morally and now immorally, as not to be personally involved, not to be affected in his personal conscience. But that kind of dreadful success is possible only when the statesman, or, more properly, the Prince of Machiavelli's argument, can use his personality as merely the instrument of the impersonal authority of his position. The State can be liberated from all ecclesiastical, social, humanitarian pressure only if the head of the State, as such, functions in deliberate withdrawal from all the obligations he has as a man.

It is a monstrous exaggeration of a quarter-truth, but Machiavelli was far from being a monster. I will not adduce his pleasanter characteristics as a man, though one cannot help liking the man who wrote 'The Prince' in the evenings of days that began with country rambles, Dante or Petrarch or Tibullus in his pocket, continued with simple fooling about in the village inn, and ended with the assumption of Court dress to write of the art and science of government. A monster does not daily spend happy hours with "a butcher, a miller and a pair of bakers," joking and amiably squabbling over Renaissance equivalent of skittles played for farthing points at the local pub; and a scoundrel does not spend years handling vast sums of State money and yet remain poor throughout. Nor does a cynical opportunist devote his energies to preaching prematurely the main doctrines of Machiavelli.

Naturally enough, in the Italy of his day he saw three needs so urgent that he cared little by what means they were met so that they were met swiftly and without disastrous reaction: the need of unity, the need to get rid of mercenary armies, and the need of a security to be achieved by unity and national armies. But he was a patriot who dreamed of Italian unity, a lover of liberty who never wrote a word in favour of any destroyer of a free government. He had no system, and has suffered much from those who arbitrarily make a system out of his writings and then attack it as his.

STET

REVIEWS

SIR WALTER

BY T. EARLE WELBY

The Life of Sir Walter Scott. By Stephen Gwynn. Thornton Butterworth. 15s.

SCOTT is one of the few writers who have a hold on us independently of their work as writers. The most enthusiastic devotee to the verse that has worn so ill, to the fiction that to so great an extent seems addressed to readers not quite adult, can hardly think more highly of the man or be more aware of the epic quality of his final struggle than those who never open a volume of his works. It is thus possible to deal with him successfully in a book that is not in prime intention critical of his verse and prose, and that is what Mr. Stephen Gwynn has done.

"Authorship," as Mr. Gwynn says, "was not his mission; it was the adventure which came to a born adventurer." But Mr. Gwynn, I think, ought much more strongly to have emphasized the fortuity of Scott's two entrances into authorship, his dependence on exterior prompting, his readiness to leave one mode for the other. The facts should have excited suspicion long ago. His first considerable composition in verse, 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' belongs to his thirty-first year, was begun merely to the command of Lady Dalkeith, and in part was metrically inspired by hearing a recital of Coleridge's 'Christabel.' That is to say, at a stage at which virtually every genuine poet has done much of his best work, Scott was making his first serious attempt, to please a lady, and partly in a manner he would not have thought of but for the accident of hearing Coleridge's poem. He continued to write verse seriously, that is, with as much seriousness as his modesty, excellent sense, and preoccupation in many other matters permitted, for no more than fifteen years, when the failure of 'Waterloo' was followed by the catastrophe of 'Harold.' He came nearest to genuine poetry after he had quite laid aside poetic ambition; and in the one piece in which he fully achieved poetry, 'Proud Maisie,' we find not the crystallization of gem-dust scattered through other and unluckier work of his, but something utterly unlike every other piece he wrote.

Turn to the novels. The first chapters of 'Waverley' were written in 1805, when Scott was thirty-four. They were not very characteristic, were reasonably enough condemned by his friend Erskine, and were pushed away by their author. Five years later he consulted Ballantyne, was moderately encouraged, but again put the project by. Four years still later, he was finishing the novel; and though he expressed, for the first time in his life, some of the craftsman's delight in his task, he doubted whether it was "quite decorous" for him, as a Clerk of Sessions, to write novels. He had found, certainly, something he could do very much better than he could do metrical romances, but was that the spirit of the born writer of fiction?

Mr. Gwynn quite rightly reminds us that the novel in Scott's youth had fallen into disrepute—with grave and reverend parsons. But it is one of the notable facts in the history of English publishing that on the day of publication Mrs. A. M. Bennett's 'Vicissitudes Abroad; or, The Ghost of My Father' sold no less than 2,000 copies at the very high price of 36s. Scott, the soul of generosity, had yet, or rather in consequence, a very lively appreciation of money; and he must have been alive to the fact that such success as Mrs. Bennett's old wife's tale enjoyed

argued keen interest in fiction among not precisely the lowest social classes.

It is not that Mr. Gwynn is really deceived about Scott the writer. In the sentence already quoted he frankly says that authorship was for Scott no more than an adventure. Elsewhere, he is plain in setting it down that Scott never felt himself dedicated to literature as an art. But, in the admiration and affection no humane and imaginative man can help feeling for Scott, every now and then he uses misleading language. So good a scholar and writer must ruefully have recognized that the narrative poems are crammed with clichés, bad in themselves, peculiarly disastrous in that they import a gentility of sentiment into works professing to deal with the stark passions and deeds of part knightly, part primitive, actors. As regards the prose, he does acknowledge that the writing is seldom vivid until, in some striking situation, we arrive at dialogue. But in the one case, he hints that Scott was being impersonal; in the other the effect of the admission is obscured by repeated, if wisely vague, laudation.

Now, as it seems to me, Scott, with so great a genius for life that it included genius for literature, but with no sense of vocation to literature and with all the modesty of the conscious amateur, adopted everything which seemed to excuse his intrusions into authorship. That he relied so much on quotations, as chapter headings, was not without significance. They were, as a rule, admirably chosen; and here it may be said that Mr. Gwynn does justice to what is not always generously enough recognized, Scott's real intimacy with Shakespeare, and also to the extraordinary merits of his edition of Dryden. But Scott, so frankly himself in life, in literature, out of sheer modesty, liked a prop. In his substance, in prose, he innovated, but even that, at least as I see it, was part of his amateur's modesty. Nobly proud as he was of Scotland, when it came to writing his attitude, though it would have been contrary to his simplicity so to define it, was "I write only of what I know, but to the best of my ability in accordance with usage."

Only, and happily, in the prose from time to time he forgot everything, and in action or speech, though never in description, certain characters stood out, "in the round," as few do in English literature except those of Shakespeare himself. But is it not noteworthy that sustained imaginative energy is reached only in the novel written in abnormal circumstances? 'The Bride of Lammermoor' was dictated when Scott was "fevered with suffering"; not so much dictated in any ordinary sense as gasped out, between spasms of intense pain, and, when the author could manage to rise at all from the couch, acted to the amanuensis. There, at least, we have swiftness, imagination sweeping all obstacles before it, a sort of savagery in the conclusion. Mr. Gwynn sees that; perhaps he does not quite see what is involved in his admission that, if Scott had been himself when writing it, it would have been moderated.

But, after all, it is not the writer, it is the man with whom Mr. Gwynn is mainly concerned. His portrait does not differ much from its predecessors, for no one can miss the main characteristics of so human, forthright, modest, gallant a creature. The defence of Scott's prodigality is well done; but was it necessary? It is surely not an accident that Balzac, Dumas, Scott were all optimistic speculators. It belonged to the largeness of their natures. Scott is to be distinguished from the master he could never have appreciated, the man who found his epic without reversion to the past, and from his disciple by the vein of common sense that appears oddly in his extravagances. But in the amplitude of his gesture as he went through life he reminds us of those others. And if Mr. Gwynn has not cared to make the comparison, he has repeatedly shown an appreciation

of the simple nobility of Scott as a man. The index is unworthy of the book, which is printed on paper that tears at any but the most cautious handling, but it is for the rest a book to be heartily commended, informed, sympathetic, and well written.

GUESSES AT TRUTH

Human History. By G. Elliot Smith. Cape. 21s.

THIS work is designed to call attention to the deep motives that have shaped man's career and to set forth the vital factors in human thought and behaviour which have been ignored by most writers. The introductory chapter, composed of somewhat heterogeneous elements, has three main themes—the search for the means of prolonging life, the development of the human brain and its influence on history, and the principle of continuity. In the succeeding chapters we also find three main themes—the evolution of man, followed by an account of the industries and wanderings of primitive man; then two chapters, apparently unrelated to the rest of the work, on the happiness and peaceful nature of the lowest types of present-day man; and finally four chapters on Egypt, as the area in which civilization first appeared, with some account of Sumer, Crete and Greece.

Professor Elliot Smith revels in controversy, but in the present work he deals comparatively gently with those who differ from him; Dr. Hall and Mr. Woolley think that Sumer did not derive its culture from Egypt, so their pretensions are dismissed as hollow; yet to the ordinary man it will appear that specialists may be in a better position to appreciate the importance of evidence than ordinary writers; this conclusion is not rendered less probable by the fact that Professor Elliot Smith commits himself in other matters to wholly untenable theories. He refers, for example, to the emphasis laid by some writers on desiccation as an element in human affairs, and tells us that volumes have been written on the subject without the slightest attempt to determine whether regions that are now deserts were not desiccated long before civilization was introduced. Does Professor Elliot Smith suppose that the incredibly numerous ruins in Iran to which Ellsworth Huntington alludes were built when the country was already too arid to support the builders? If an area now arid is covered with ruins the obvious conclusion is that the inhabitants were more numerous before the coming of the drought; but Professor Elliot Smith does not seem to think so.

In a general survey of human history written by an author less devoted to a pan-Egyptian theory than is Professor Elliot Smith, we should find among the points dealt with the domestication of animals, the invention of the wheel and the plough, navigation, metal working, and so on; some of these matters are not mentioned at all, others are so briefly dealt with that they are barely mentioned in the index. Even the origins of agriculture receive rather summary treatment, for maize, rice, rye and oats are not mentioned, and the author, when he speaks of agriculture in connexion with barley, appears to mean hoe cultivation, for he does not deal with the plough and does not realize that the plough was commonly drawn by a domestic animal. However important be the practice of mummification, the search for gold and the creation of kingship discussed in this work, the author seems to be more interested in supporting his own previous conclusions than in providing the reader with a world-wide survey of human history. The book is interesting and readable; but it is overloaded with guesses; in such a field of study as philology, on which the author cannot claim to speak with any authority, we find it suggested that Basque is a language of the Upper Palæolithic period; it may

be, but it is a wholly unverifiable hypothesis which leads nowhere.

Even less excusable is the treatment of totemism. Professor Elliot Smith supposes that the Divine Cow was regarded as the parent of the king and of the king's placenta, and that the placenta was the totem of the people of Egypt, from whom the idea spread all over the world. In support of this theory he quotes beliefs from the Congo, the White Nile and South America; the two latter appear to be cases of true totemism, but the Dinka belief is a myth of descent invented to account for their totemism in which there is no mention of the placenta; the Andeans regard the totem as an ally of their first ancestor who acquired it by a blood pact; but blood brotherhood has nothing to do with consanguinity by descent from the same mother and, consequently, is wholly unrelated to the Egyptian facts.

Conversely the Egyptian and Congo beliefs do not appear to be totemic; the double or animal helper belongs to a different cycle of ideas; a tribal or national totem is a contradiction in terms; no system of exogamy can be based on it; contributory to this confusion is the author's false idea of the nature of exogamy; it is not marrying outside the realm, but outside the clan; if the Egyptians were exogamous it was not because their kings took foreign wives.

If the social anthropology is erratic the demography is chaotic; we are told that the descendants of a single pair of human beings increasing at the rate of one per cent. per annum will amount in two hundred years to seventeen hundred millions. A little knowledge of English history shows that a population increasing at more than this rate grew from six millions to sixteen millions in the eighteenth century; it does not require a very great knowledge of arithmetic to discover that the period should be over two thousand years and not two hundred.

If Professor Elliot Smith had laid down for himself a self-denying ordinance and steadily refused to be drawn upon unfamiliar ground like philology and sociology, it is probable that this book would not have been one whit less interesting—and the interest of it is great—and it would certainly have been far more valuable as a contribution to knowledge and as a study in method.

RARE BEN TURNER

About Myself. By Ben Turner. Humphrey Toulmin. 10s. 6d.

MR. BEN TURNER is one of that large majority of Labour leaders who must cause particular dismay to Moscow. What can the scientific Marxian, stuffing himself with his prolet-cult and his "ideology" of this or that, make of the genial, sentimental English Socialist whose political handbook is the New Testament, whose school of democracy the equalitarian tradition that has come down through the poets and the Chartists and the radical faith in Natural Right? The Minister of Mines is himself a poet, better, like Burns, in his dialect than when he attempts the formal cut of a more genteel verse. Mr. Turner is Yorkshire and very happy to remain so. A keen internationalist, he is also the most devoted of localists. The "shoddy" country is hardly imaginable without him, nor is he to be thought of without it. He began as a helper at a hand-loom at the age of nine and a half and went to the mill as a half-timer a year later. It was a hard schooling, but Mr. Ben Turner is not a grumbler. So long as the children of our time do not work through those terrible days of long mornings in the factory and afternoons at school, there is something accomplished.

Mr. Asquith was a Morley man and Morley is in the shoddy country. So Mr. Turner liked Mr. Asquith.

Shoddy, by the way, is a good deal better stuff than most people suppose, and Mr. Turner gives a most interesting description of the rag-trade and of the new cloth that is fashioned from the old; often it is high quality material and many of the most elegant may be wearing it without knowing it:

... some of the best shoddies are worn on the lawn tennis, cricket and sports grounds of this and other countries, and sweaters, jumpers and fine knitted garments, for the upper classes as well as others, come in their raw material from some of our best shoddy manufacturers in the Heavy Woollen district. . .

... There is some very decent cloth sold now to merchants and clothing factories at 2s. 6d. to 3s. per yard, and as a man's suit length is $3\frac{1}{4}$ yards you can reckon up that by the time it gets to the wearer there has been a bit of conjuring going on.

"Conjuring" is good.

Among Mr. Turner's friends is G. B. S., who, seeking a dialect for 'St. Joan,' wrote thus for advice on Yorkshire speech:

Dear Ben Turner,

Will you just scrawl for me on the enclosed card the names of a few published stories in north country dialect, and pop it into the post. Your own probably.

I am writing a play about Joan of Arc; and it is no use making the girl talk like Dr. Johnson; I must devise some sort of dialect for her; and as she was north country I want to found it on our north country talk. My own dialect, being Irish, is not available. I know nobody who will understand what I want as well as you.

Don't give yourself any trouble beyond writing the titles; I know how you must curse the postman.

ever,

G. BERNARD SHAW

Mr. Turner sent further dialect books and G. B. S. replied:

The twelve books have just arrived—twelve thousand thanks.

The worst of the Dialect Societies is that they are too much taken up with out-of-the-way words and pronunciations; some of them think that when they have written a story in University English, and then mis-spelt it and spoiled the grammar a little, they have produced Yorkshire Dialect, or whatever other dialect they are after. But what I am after is the construction of the sentences, the music and dramatic emphasis of them. All that can be got without going outside Johnson's Dictionary; and that will fit Joan of Arc as well as Jenny of Otley.

It is queer to learn that in his boyhood Mr. Turner acted regularly in 'St. George and the Dragon,' the same folk play that is described in 'The Return of the Native.' Since it is a resurrection-play it is as old as civilization, for the battle with death was the first motive of drama, though very few of the village mummers who have carried on the rites for centuries can have had any idea of what they were doing. However, even the Bolshevik can be a traditionalist unawares. Has he not mummified Lenin, the king-founder of his State, as the Egyptian mummified Osiris, who discovered agriculture by irrigation and built the State around the Nile?

It is a pity that Mr. Turner's book has not been brought up to date. It was evidently written before the last General Election and has not been revised. The new directors of the *Daily Herald* will not thank him for his final words. Mr. Turner was a ten years' director of the *Herald* and on his last page he writes: "It has not tried any of the expensive stunts of other papers, like the immoral insurance schemes." At the present moment the *Daily Herald*, that would never touch pitch, is as much committed to insurance as any paper. Has pitch then become purity when the means to purchase it have been acquired? O rare Ben Turner; but on this occasion a little rash!

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

The Jungle Tide. By John Still. Blackwood. 7s. 6d.

Travels in the Congo. By André Gide. Translated from the French by Dorothy Bussy. Knopf. 15s.

AT long intervals—not once in every publishing season, but perhaps twice in every three years—there appears among the rather untidy crowd of vociferous, exciting, travel books, one quiet and stately figure, just one in which the cheerful mood of after-dinner reminiscence is subordinated to literary form, mere narrative becomes eloquence, and a few descriptive passages, well enough in their way, are replaced by a whole living and unforgettable picture, in which every page and every word are made to tell. Such a book is Mr. Still's 'The Jungle Tide.' The publishers, on the paper cover, claim that "there is no other book like this one, nor is there ever likely to be." That, happily, is going too far: the book will have its successors. But while reassuring ourselves on this point, we need not be less grateful to Mr. Still for bringing this wonderful vision of the Ceylon jungle before our eyes. No other living writer could have done exactly that, for no other has the deep knowledge of the jungle and its inhabitants combined with such a power of sheer word-painting.

Mr. Still has lived in Ceylon for many years. He is a sportsman, a naturalist, and an archaeologist who has made a special study of the half-buried cities. And whichever of these dissimilar activities he happens to be engaged in, he writes with the same passionate delight in his surroundings, and the same rare skill in getting it on to paper. For instance, he goes out to shoot a few wild fowl for the pot and this happens to him:

While I was standing on the bund of a little village tank [that is, an ancient reservoir, now become a pond], bathed in an afterglow that set the sky afire, two whistling teal came flying over me, and I dropped them into deep water a score of yards from the bund. A slim boy, brown and naked, slipped in to retrieve them for me, and the ripples of his swimming made harlequin patterns of

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blue and gold and scarlet where the mirror of the sky rocked in his wake. As he put his hand on one of the birds, a crocodile's black jaws broke through the colours and engulfed the other.

Perfect, in its way! Yet the passage is taken almost at random from a book that abounds in such. Crocodiles are the only creatures with which Mr. Still feels no sympathy. With poisonous snakes he is on terms of the greatest familiarity—all dating from the day when he saw a snake-charmer handling a cobra, and, having carefully noted the man's actions, boldly offered to do the same himself, and succeeded. He has a theory, which he explains most convincingly, that cobras have a blind spot, so that, if you reach for their heads from a certain angle, they momentarily lose sight of your hand. But he will not attempt to touch a Russell's viper, nor, he says, will the native snake-charmers, unless its fangs have been removed. Few white men have a better right to an opinion on the point. On elephant roads, on bees, on the stalking buffalo, and on the curious problem of where the flamingoes breed, Mr. Still writes with the same knowledge and distinction. But his concern with lost cities has made him a little pessimistic about the works of man. Why, he asks, should our cities and our irrigation works last longer than these? Why should British imperialism endure for ever? Is it not already dying? We have added a hundred millions to the population of India, and rolled back the jungle; but the jungle will return, as it has before. Mr. Still views that prospect with some equanimity. There are modern hotels and motor-cars in several of his old haunts, and he does not like them.

Though the work of a distinguished man of letters, M. André Gide's travel book is considerably less literary in form and method than Mr. Still's. It is, in fact, nothing more than the pleasant day-to-day record of a journey through the Congo to Lake Chad which M. Gide had the courage to undertake when close upon sixty years of age. Evidently it did him no harm. On the contrary, he records, on one occasion, feeling his "heart and spirits light as air," and on another "an intoxication of health," so that he would walk for miles through jungle paths when he might have ridden. Of course, M. Gide is not content with mere narrative; he gives us a vivid impression—aided sometimes by unpleasantly gruesome details—of the country through which he passed and its not very happy inhabitants. For the natives he felt an extraordinary sympathy and spent a good deal of his time championing their cause and showing up the brutality of certain French officials in letters which he addressed to the Governor. These letters seem to have been treated with marked respect; and it is a fact that, though M. Gide's book (in which he repeats his charges) was published in French two years ago, it has apparently been followed by no libel actions. Indeed, M. Gide appears as a man of keen penetration in such matters, and an unusual courage in acting upon his impressions.

GENERAL SEELEY'S MEMOIRS

Adventure. By J. E. B. Seeley. Heinemann. 21s.

THIS book is well named. Few public men of our time can truthfully relate so adventurous a tale, which may rank with most romances. They say that adventures are to the adventurous, and it is clear that the author has always enjoyed a chance of risking his life. When a schoolboy, he fell seventy feet over the cliffs, near Freshwater, and owed his survival to the fact that a few tons of soft earth preceded him. Later he was drowned,

to all intents, and was only brought round by artificial respiration.

Though not a professional soldier, General Seeley fought in two wars, and more than once found himself the only survivor of his party. Sometimes the charm worked in the reverse way, and it was lucky for the Empire, as he observes, that he twice missed a pot-shot at General Botha at fifteen yards. "I like to remember," says General Seeley, "that eight years later Botha sat in the gallery of the House of Commons while I proposed the South Africa Union Bill." General Seeley recalls that when the present King was recommended to make Botha a lieutenant-general in the British Army, His Majesty observed that this was the first time a sovereign had been asked to give any man such a rank for his brilliant achievement against us, but that in view of Botha's outstanding services to the Empire he would make him a full general.

General Seeley's account of the vital years in which he was at the War Office is full of interest. The Curragh business set him free to seek danger once more, and his description of his experiences in the great war palpitates with excitement. He began as a special service officer on French's staff, and later was given command of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. His remarks on "the front-line point of view" and "the military mind" are particularly instructive. His narrative culminates in the brilliant achievement of his splendid brigade at Moreuil in March, 1918, when they stopped the German advance at a most critical spot and thereby saved our line from being broken at Amiens, with incalculable results. That moment, he says, was "the supreme event of his life," and it makes a fitting close to the story of a career which has throughout been "a glorious adventure."

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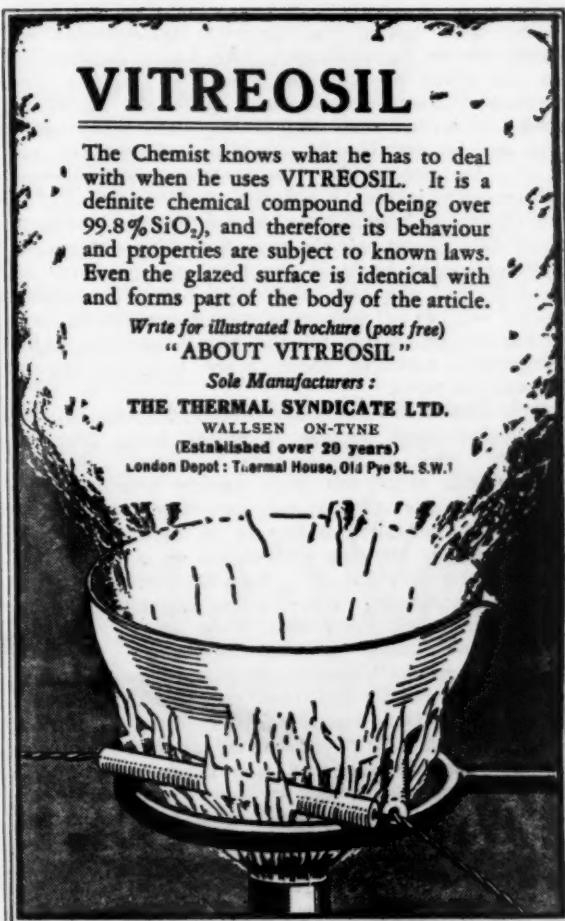
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SUBURBIA ALOFT

Twenty Thousand Miles in a Flying-Boat. By

Sir Alan Cobham. Harrap. 10s. 6d.

The Airway to see Europe. By Eleanor Elsner.

Marriott. 6s.

ALTHOUGH one is worth reading and the other not, these books have several points of resemblance. They are neither of them accounts of legitimate experience. Sir Alan Cobham's girdling of Africa was three parts by way of propaganda, whatever his incidental contributions to the knowledge of local flying conditions and facilities. His 23,000-mile flight in the Short all-metal hydroplane, *Singapore*, fitted with two 700-h.p. Condor engines, was a subsidized triumphal procession punctuated by minor disasters. Miss Elsner, according to the publishers' "blurb," was given passage by the big airlines over their various routes so that they could get her impressions. We wish they had kept them.

Sir Alan Cobham's route, inadequately illustrated by a map that does not mark his stopping places, lay over Europe to Bordeaux and Marseilles, and thence by way of Corsica and Sicily to Malta, where he was held up with a battered port wing for over a month. From there the line of flight followed the Nile to its source and continued southwards by way of Lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa to Beira and Cape-town, where the return journey, following the West Coast of Africa, began. His account is "chatty," readable and illustrated by album-photographs ('Sir Alan Sighting the Indian Ocean,' 'Lady Cobham in Town Attire at Durban') and by snapshots of the *Singapore*, mainly undergoing repair or in need of it. There are the exaggerations and inaccuracies normal in books of this kind. A wind of Force 7 on the Beaufort scale, legitimately to be described as half a gale, becomes "a howling gale" with "giant foam-crested waves," so that "it seemed that we should never sight Sicily." At Lake Tanganyika we are given an impression of the seaplane zig-zagging between water-spouts, while the statement made on p. 249 that the journey was never once held up by weather is explicitly contradicted on p. 80. In spite of this bias in favour of suburban twitter (there is even a photograph of the expedition canary) it has been impossible for Sir Alan to eliminate the interest of his narrative. The stampede of the elephant herds in the Nile swamps north of Uganda, and the seaplane's flight down a narrow gorge, walled by rock and roofed by clouds, not certain of its ending till the blue waters of Lake Tanganyika appeared there, make two legitimately dramatic pictures.

Over the Nile the party found descent to the water unpleasant because it meant being plunged suddenly into a temperature of thirty degrees warmer than at 4-5,000 feet. Anyone who has used a Primus on a small boat will appreciate the stability of a craft that allowed one to be used without a single mishap, standing unfastened on a bench, all the way round Africa. There are several quite amusing anecdotes. There is an engaging quality about the French sailor who, when asked, "When is this gale going to stop blowing?" at Port Etienne, replied, "Never. It blows like this day and night, year in and year out, from the same direction." The meteorologist's report at the Canary Islands that "on the day after the morrow at dawn, as the sun rose, the north wind would suddenly drop and cease to blow for a period of from eight to nine minutes" also has its points, especially as it was apparently right. This is something like a meteorologist.

Sir Alan Cobham's flight was made possible by the loan of a flying-boat insured for £25,000, by the previous distribution of immense quantities of

oil and fuel over an inaccessible continent, and by considerable help from officially oiled wheels. It therefore casts very little light on commercial possibilities, and those who expect his book to leave them any the wiser about this or any other technical point will be disappointed. But it is well worth reading, once, quickly.

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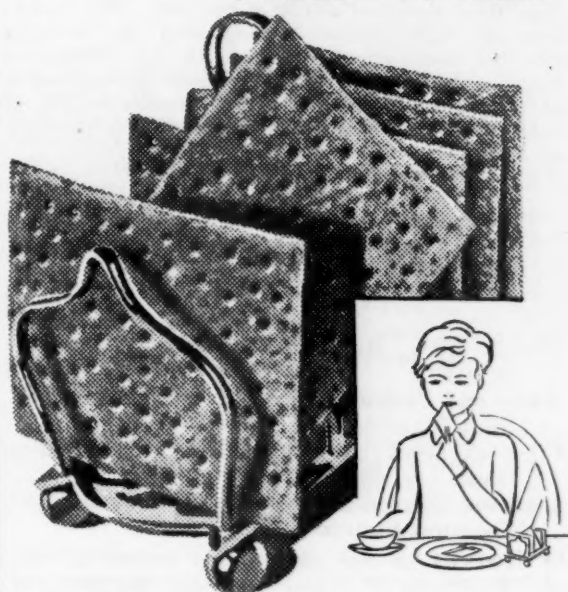
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NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

War is War. By "Ex-Private X." Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Adam and Evelyn at Kew. By Robert Herring. Elkin Matthews and Marrot. 21s.

Pilgrim's Ford. By Muriel Hine. The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.

Moorland Terror. By Hugh Broadbridge. Thornton Butterworth. 7s. 6d.

THOUGH no less alive to the horrors of war, "Ex-Private X" is tougher-minded than most war novelists and achieves an easier fatalism. Responsibility sours the temper and injures the sense of humour. If you are giving an order you have to take yourself seriously; you cannot afford to make a joke of it or see its ironical side. But carrying out an order is a different matter. You may, you must—to vindicate your own intelligence—see how inept it is, pull it to pieces, and pity the poor fool who gave it. Nothing stirs the ironical spirit of the ordinary man more than to be made to do something which he considers silly. Identifying himself with Divine Wisdom, he sees a hundred ways in which this particular order offends against sense, suggests a hundred playful alternatives by which those in authority can further demonstrate their folly. He has nothing to lose by his criticisms; nobody is going to act upon them, results will never prove them wrong. He can indulge his humour without fear that the laugh will one day be turned against him. Moreover, to be in authority is to be isolated; to give an order is a disjunctive act, separating a man from his fellows; but to receive an order is a charter of solidarity, uniting the most opposite types in the bond of a common grievance.

"Ex-Private X" writes as a private soldier and he is decidedly rank-conscious. In a preface he says:

Many books about the war have been written, and will be written, by ex-officers; but, as all those who served must realize, an officer, of no matter what rank, saw the war from an angle far remote from the view-point of Thomas Atkins. I will go further and state that a platoon commander, who practically lived with his men, was incapable of appreciating their sufferings and hardships unless he too had been in the ranks.

This extract gives a fairly good idea of the spirit in which 'War is War' is written. The author, while conscientiously doing justice to commissioned officers, tends to be critical of them, especially of the Staff. He identifies himself whole-heartedly with the rank and file and, though unlike in temperament and education, felt himself one of them, enjoyed the comfort of their companionship and the blessing of their humour. Aided by these spiritual supports, he was able to go through the war without losing his sense of proportion or the poise of his personality.

He settled down to it, taking things as they came, but taking them on their merits, distinguishing, discriminating, mixing himself with his experiences. One may find his tone too robust, his attitude towards calamity and horror too resigned; but one cannot deny that he has got the war into some sort of perspective. The book is exceedingly readable, individual and provocative. The author has a gift for incisive speech and a loathing of verbal compromise and qualification. He has taken advantage of his anonymity to tell the whole truth, as he sees it. His frankness is bracing, his good faith beyond question; but I wonder whether Truth yields readily to shock-tactics and if its connexion with frankness is as close as it seems.

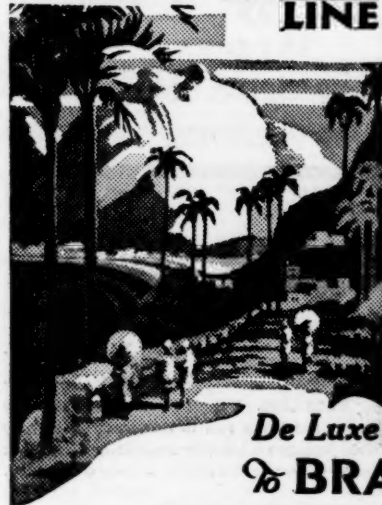
'Adam and Evelyn at Kew' is a bewildering little story, fable, extravaganza—I hardly know what to call it—very prettily printed and produced, and adorned with many cheerful illustrations in colour, intellectualized versions of the pictures one finds in a child's first Reader. The book opens with a long reverie, botanical, historical and general, inspired by the theme of Kew Gardens and put into the mind of one of the gardeners. Then the gardener falls asleep and dreams for fourteen pages in heroic couplets. He awakes to find a film actress impersonating Fanny Burney. The two converse and there is some entertaining satire about the Films:

A cue! Memories fluttered in Evelyn's heart, took possession and she registered; alone and at this hour, what are you thinking of Sir Ernest? Do you wish to with no mercy break a moth on the star it desired? It is too late. A woman's promises are the bottles of last night's party—empty but painful to remember. . . .

The floors of her Palace were not more marble than her skin, and as many suitors thronged about her.

This is excellent fooling and I must admit that I enjoyed the occasional sops Mr. Herring throws to the groundlings more than the virtuoso passages in

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which he seeks to dazzle the intellectuals. To say that a book is too clever, besides being a reflection on oneself, is an ungenerous and often an envious kind of criticism; but I think Mr. Herring would have done better to cut out some of his erudition. It is certainly flattering to the reader, this assumption that he is familiar with the niceties of late eighteenth-century Court gossip, and to detect the source of a recondite allusion ministers vastly to one's self-esteem. But how easy it is to have a surfeit of proper names, especially when the names dwarf the context and clog the current of the narrative:

"A regular Babel," he repeated. Then in the strain of his metaphysical moment he went on: "Yet all of them, Daphnises and Chloes, Perditas, Floribels, Touchstones and Audreys, Fenwicks and Pearls, Mrs. Flanders and Captains Barfoot, Bloom, Miriam, Fantocks and Prufrocks, Narcissus or Niobe—they're all Adams and Evelyns."

But that of course simply was not true.

Perhaps not: but Mr. Herring has by this time so confounded one's apprehension of the real and the unreal, so bedevilled one's sense of time and of identity, that it hardly seems to matter whether the fictitious personages catalogued above can properly be called Adams and Evelyns or not. If the story had been strong on the narrative side—as every good fable or satire should be—it could "have got away with" its gross freight of learning instead of being held up and made to meander level with its fount.

'Pilgrim's Ford' is a study in married life—a problem piece. And yet the problem is so delicately clothed in flesh and blood, and so closely related to everyday life, that one does not feel that Miss Muriel Hine has over-simplified her canvas. Joy Damer is married to a man older than herself; perhaps she would not have married him at all had he not been

the cousin of an airman who engaged her childish fancy. He is not very kind to her, goes about with other women, leaves her a great deal by herself. To relieve their straitened circumstances she is obliged to write; she wears herself out in the service of an ideal which seems hardly worthy of so much sacrifice. The reality is bad enough, appearances are even worse. She has one thing to look forward to: the inheritance of Pilgrim's Ford, the home of her youth, with all its associations of security. But the inheritance, when it comes, brings with it her last and greatest struggle, for her husband loathes a country life. Miss Hine has shown a very just sense of complicated issues in 'Pilgrim's Ford'; it holds one's interest to the last.

The birds twitter engagingly through the pages of 'Moorland Terror'; the nature descriptions are really fresh and can make one feel hot and June-like in February. The hero and heroine are not very convincing; she ignores his advice, is captured and carried off by the villain and is rescued (this time only half naked) by the hero. But the professor is a charming character and the story, though not intrinsically interesting, is well worked out.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Best of England. By Horace Annesley Vachell. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

ONE purpose of this book is obviously to "put Americans wise" before an English visit. Horseback Hall is explained to them and so is the correct kit for the various departments of sporting life. They are prudently warned about the food in English hotels and given a short survey of the sights of London. Mr. Vachell is enthusiastic and tactful; he does not tell them too much, and the stranger with an appetite for high life will be delighted by the squirearchical

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tone of the whole. This treatise is only unconventional when the author turns round suddenly to defend croquet as a game, a defence much needed. For the rest the book represents the emotions recollected in tranquillity of a man who has had the luck and the liberty to enjoy the sporting life, to meet all the "right" people, and do all the "right" things instead of putting in five and a half days at the office. A French costumier once labelled a gent.'s sports suit "très snob," meaning it kindly. So do we suggest that label for this book, with polite intentions.

Who's Who in the Theatre. Pitman. 30s.

INDEFATIGABILITY continues to wax unquenchable in Mr. John Parker, who has now compiled the Sixth Edition of 'Who's Who in the Theatre.' The edition has been delayed owing to a burglary which destroyed much of the material. But nothing deters Mr. Parker, who not only maintains his old standard of encyclopædic information about plays, players, and playhouses, but thinks of new information to impart. We can now know, for instance, the extent to which the universities and leading schools have supplied capacity to the art of the theatre, while Dr. J. M. Bulloch once more traces, with his theatrical pedigrees, the amount of hereditary talent in the dramatic world. There are five hundred new biographies and the casts of all London productions since July, 1925, as well as every kind of detail about long runs and theatrical history, ancient and modern. There is no book of reference which owes more to the energy of a single enthusiast and none which is more carefully and thoroughly executed.

Building Craftsmanship, In Brick and Tile, and in Stone Slates. By Nathaniel Lloyd. Cambridge University Press. 15s.

DOMESTIC Architecture in England still depends as much on the quality of its craftsmanship as on the general design. This is a cause of its own peculiar charm. The modern concrete forms of Germany, or those of Le Corbusier in France, have none of this intimacy of material; and the result on the community may well be a hard machine-made people. Mr. Lloyd's life-work seems to be to defend the English house against such an invasion, and to preserve the delight of individual brick or tile. This is the secret; every brick or tile speaks for itself and is not a compulsory atom in a huge machine. 'Building Craftsmanship' is a book of Texture, admirably illustrating by photographs, drawings, and letterpress precisely how the material should be used to give the maximum effect while subordinated to the whole. The general standard of the illustrations is so high that the inclusion of one or two deplorable modern fireplaces may be overlooked as exceptions that prove the rule. The drawings are excellent and combine to make the book of real value to architect and layman alike.

Ntsukumbini, Cattle Thief. By Frank Brownlee. Cape. 7s. 6d.

THIS is an attempt to tell the life story of a South African native in his own words, after the manner of Aloysius Horn. Mr. Horn is, no doubt, a difficult person to follow; anyhow, Ntsukumbini, the cattle-thief, remains but a shadowy and unconvincing figure by comparison, though his anecdotes are lively enough in themselves. Mr. Brownlee, in his preface, asks his white readers to "deal patiently" with Ntsukumbini, remembering always that he is a black man and that "his mind does not work in the same way as your own." But that is just the trouble: the mind of this Matabele does, apparently, work in precisely the same way as that of a rather sentimental, commonplace white man, who has modelled his principles upon those of the cinema hero. He is always forgiving his enemies, and "playing the game," and being modest when people praise him; his proudest moment was when an Englishman said, "You may be a damned black nigger, but you're white right through." In short, the atmosphere is only too familiar. Yet Mr. Brownlee, as a Native Commissioner, has lived so long among the Kraals and knows the people so well that one hesitates to say he has got his picture all wrong. His anecdotes, at any rate, go with a swing and the "white man" sentimentality is helped down with many touches of humour.

ACROSTICS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 415

First of our 31st Quarter

(CLOSING DATE: First post Thursday, March 9)

AN INSECT, AND THE FROTHY HIDING-PLACE
IN WHICH THE LARVA VEILS ITS MODEST FACE.

1. On dates and locusts feeds: large ears and bright black eyes.
2. Core of what bad men plan who're cunning but not wise.
3. To tooth-ache this pertains; Greek is its derivation.
4. Routes, railways, sights, hotels: the fullest information.
5. Escapes from weary breasts worn with the day's exertion.
6. Lop ends of crested bird whose smell excites aversion.
7. Aye ready for a fight, like Chanticleer the rooster.
8. Ingredient in success of every skillful booster.
9. Curtail a Northman bold, a red-haired son of daring.
10. Gules lion, pictured thus, is Scotland's royal bearing.

Solution of Acrostic No. 413

B	uffe	T ¹	
I	ntrude	R	1 A blow; also, a refreshment-bar.
R	az	Or ²	2 "There hath not come a razor upon mine
D		Uca ³	head; for I have been a Nazarene unto
C	atarac	T	God from my mother's womb."
a	itif	F	Judges xvi, 17.
T	ivol	I ⁴	3 The Villa d'Este, at Tivoli, near Rome, is
C	hes	S	well known.
H	awfinc	H	4 Incubus, "evil spirit supposed to descend
I	ncub	I ⁴	on sleeping persons; nightmare."
N	eapolita	N ⁵	5 "See Naples and die!"
G	ri	G ⁶	6 "As merry as a grig" or cricket.

ACROSTIC No. 413.—The winner is "Madge," Mrs. Addison-Scott, 12a Elsham Road, Kensington, W.14, who has selected for her prize 'Strange Company,' by S. Theodore Felstead, published by Hutchinson and reviewed by us on February 15. Twenty other competitors chose this book, thirty-three 'Madame de Maintenon,' twelve 'Studies in Eighteenth Century Diplomacy,' eleven 'Postscript to Adventure,' etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—A. E., Armadale, Aron, Barberry, Bargee, E. Barrett, A. de V. Blathwayt, Bolo, Boote, Boskerris, Mrs. Robt. Brown, Mrs. J. Butler, Carlton, Chip, Clam, Maud Crowther, Cuniculus, Dhualt, Dolmar, Ursula D'Ot, C. W. S. Ellis, Gay, Glamis, Mrs. Greene, James, Jeff, Jop, Mrs. Lole, Met, George W. Miller, Miss Moore, Lady Mottram, N. O. Sellam, M. Overton, Peter, Polamar, Shorwell, Sisyphus, Sloane, Spyella, St. Ives, Stucco, Thora, Miss Daphne Touche, Tyro, H. M. Vaughan, Willoughby, Capt. W. R. Wolseley, W. P. J.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Mrs. R. H. Boothroyd, Buns, Ceyx, J. Chambers, Chailey, Coque, J. R. Cripps, Mrs. Alice Crooke, Fossil, D. L. Haldane-Porter, T. Hartland, Iago, John Lennie, Lilian, Capt. I. M. Macdonald, Margaret, Martha, A. M. W. Maxwell, J. F. Maxwell, Mrs. Milne, M. I. R., Margaret Owen, F. M. Petty, Robin, Robinsky, P. D. Turner, C. J. Warden.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Miss Carter, Bertram R. Carter, D. L., Falcon, G. M. Fowler, Jeye, Quis, C. G. Tosswill. All others more.

For light 2 Interloper is accepted. Light 1 baffled 24 solvers; Light 8, 8; Lights 5 and 11, 7; Light 7, 3; Lights 6 and 11, 2; Light 12, 1. Miss Carter omitted Light 9.

ACROSTIC No. 412.—Correct: M. I. R.

G. W. M.—Not mine, but my brother's, in Sussex.

MARTHA.—I accept your statement and will look the matter up on my return from Rome. I have not the No. 411 solutions with me.

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AT this time, the plight of the destitute and homeless is desperate. By providing food, warmth and shelter, THE CHURCH ARMY is relieving many of untold hardship and misery.

HOMELESS WOMEN

—hungry, footsore, and exhausted, many with little ones to protect from cruel winds and driving rain, are being welcomed to the kindly atmosphere of C.A. Homes and Hostels.

Extensions are urgently NEEDED.

£250 will endow one more bed.

£5 provides a bed.

MEN OF ALL AGES

—from mere youth to the elderly—are receiving help and obtaining a new grip on life through the efforts of the Church Army. All those who come under its care are given the opportunity of working back to independence. 250 to 300 men are helped every night.

£10 is the cost of gathering, feeding, and sheltering 200 men for one night.

Gifts, large or small, will be gratefully acknowledged by
Pres. Carlile, C.H., D.D., Hon. Chief Secretary,
55 Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

CHURCH ARMY

Company Meeting

SELFRIDGE AND CO.

A RECORD YEAR

The twenty-second Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Selfridge and Co. Ltd., was held on February 24 at the company's store, Oxford Street, W. Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge (chairman and managing director) presided, and in moving the adoption of the report and accounts said the profit shown was, all things considered, the best in their history, and the entire condition of the business, even as viewed from an intermural standpoint, was most excellent.

We continue to depreciate (on paper) our several items on the credit side of the balance-sheet, and this is in accordance with a conservative policy adopted early in the life of this house. Our depreciated items are all, of course, actually worth much more than as shown on the balance-sheet, but our policy of depreciation simply means an added reserve and the retention of that amount in the business.

With their approaching anniversary (March 15) the business became twenty-one years old. During those twenty-one years the feelings of the public towards the business of retail distribution had shown an extraordinary change. And during these twenty or more years, in which this change in the public's attitude and appreciation of retail distribution had been taking place, what had been the position of this house, of which to-day he was the spokesman? They had grown with almost each succeeding year. They had started twenty-one years ago with 1,100 employees; they had now in this individual business between 4,000 and 5,000, while in the entire Selfridge businesses they showed 15,000 on the rolls. Their premises had been added to continually, and they had further necessary additions in contemplation.

All this has been done by serious, thoughtful, fearless work. It has not come by chance. It is, instead, a harvest grown from seeds of determination, of careful judgment, of continual energy, of the real, genuine love of work and accomplishment, and of earnest and undeviating attention to business detail. No man can do a thing well who does not put his heart into it, and no chief or manager can win from his associates or employees their goodwill, their hearty best efforts, unless he himself shows by his example a love of the undertaking and a happy willingness to make his hours as long as theirs, and to fill those hours with intelligent effort. The conduct of a great distributing business is a serious matter which must certainly be avoided by all who dislike hard mental work.

Their profits had shown equal progress. The first year £6,100, the second £36,200, the third £50,200, the fourth £104,000, the fifth £131,500, the sixth £134,800, the seventh £150,200, the eighth £225,100, the ninth £258,700, the tenth £322,800, the eleventh (the boom year of 1919) £372,400, etc., and this year £481,312. A good many had spoken and written flatteringly of this result, but they were not over-impressed. To be sure, if the profits of all the Selfridge businesses, including those of the provincial branches, were added together the total would exceed the £900,000 mark.

The least agreeable item on their sheet appeared this year as part of the profit and loss account, and showed a charge of £31,002 to make good the guarantee to shareholders of Wm. Whiteley Ltd. These sums which they paid must be regarded as only adding to the amount paid for the business, which many considered as far too low.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted, and the dividends as recommended were agreed to.

The directors retiring by rotation (Mr. H. G. Selfridge, jun., and Mr. H. J. Clarke) were re-elected, and Mr. A. H. Youngman, who had been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Ellis W. Davies, who retired in accordance with the articles, was also re-elected. The auditors (Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Co.) were reappointed.

A cordial vote of thanks having been passed to the chairman, the proceedings terminated.

Investments?
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and profitably.

THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

SOME weeks ago opinion in the City inclined to the view that there would be an increase in the volume of business on the Stock Exchange after the Hatry settlement had been completed. This, unfortunately, has not proved to be the case. The Hatry settlement is now nothing but an unhappy memory, and though, thanks to the adequate arrangements made, no failures occurred, several stock-broking firms, it is rumoured, found their resources seriously strained in fulfilling the obligations of clients who defaulted. Whereas serious financial losses and Budget uncertainties are playing a big part in the curtailment of Stock Exchange business, the predominating factor appears to be lack of confidence, which is leading to considerable sums being shipped to America for investment purposes. Notwithstanding that the yield on these American investments is low compared with similar investments in this country, it seems that many investors are accepting the smaller income entailed to relieve their minds of the anxiety which they feel about home investments in the present political position. Although this wholesale export of sterling is to be deprecated from a national point of view, the reasons that prompt it are easily understood. While this operation is actually being carried out, it naturally is having an adverse effect on the dollar value of sterling, but in future years it should prove a source of strength, inasmuch as dividends received from these investments will create a demand for sterling in dollars.

THE NEW CONVERSION LOAN

The announcement last Saturday of the new $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Conversion Loan came as a surprise to the City. News of its advent had been guarded in that inimical manner associated with Bank of England secrets. On the present occasion, Mr. Snowden has avoided the pitfalls far more completely than in the case of last November's issue of 5 per cent. Conversion Loan. The terms offered for conversion to the holders of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Treasury Bonds maturing on May 15 next are sufficiently attractive to warrant the suggestion that the Conversion Loan will certainly fulfil the functions for which it is created. The fact that in the prospectus it is stipulated that the lists for cash subscriptions would be open for twenty-four hours at the longest, indicates that a considerable quantity of fresh money is not required.

NORTHAMPTON ELECTRIC

I have frequently drawn attention during the last twelve months to the suitability of the shares of first-class electric supply undertakings for investment purposes. A further example of the steady expansion in revenue which these companies enjoy is provided by the forty-first annual report of the Northampton Electric Light and Power Company Limited. This shows that gross profits have increased from £106,734 in 1928 to £131,309 in 1929 while net profits have increased from £88,519 in 1928 to £113,281 in 1929. Shareholders are to reap the benefit of this increase by receiving a final dividend of 6 per cent., making, with the interim dividend of 4 per cent., 10 per cent. for the year, which compares with 9 per cent. for the

preceding year. Even this increased dividend constitutes a conservative distribution in view of the amounts earned and the generous allowance made for depreciation.

STORE COMPANIES

A satisfactory feature has been provided by the reports of the various store companies for 1929, Harrods, Selfridges, Dickins and Jones, Swan and Edgars, and Lewis's of Liverpool, among others, showing increased profits. In view of the general uncertainty as regards 1930 and the possibility that adverse trade may decrease spending power, it appears possible that these companies' figures, when issued in 1930, may make a less favourable showing. At the same time, when one remembers the great reduction in commodity prices, it seems possible that these companies may maintain last year's further advance in profits, not necessarily by maintaining their turnover, but by increasing the margin between the purchase and sale prices of the goods they supply.

RUBBER

Holders of rubber shares must have received some slight encouragement from the indications that rather more interest is being taken in this market, a fact attributable to the scheme of voluntary restriction recently approved by the Dutch producers. Whether this restriction scheme will be widely adopted is not known at the moment of writing these notes. The production of rubber must have reached, or almost reached, its peak level, and, therefore, it is hoped that even without artificial palliatives the economic laws of supply and demand will tend to improve the position of this commodity. The moment is opportune to pick up really first-class rubber shares and lock them away—for those who are entitled to take the element of risk involved and possess the necessary patience required in locking these shares away for capital appreciation in a year or two's time.

TIN

Although evidence is still forthcoming that the tin restriction scheme is gaining adherence in all parts of the world, the price of tin shows little sign of improvement and the share market remains neglected. Probably two or three months will have to elapse before the effect of the curtailed outputs will be felt, always providing no substantial falling off in consumption is experienced within this period.

INDIA TYRE AND RUBBER COMPANY

The second annual report and accounts of the India Tyre and Rubber Company makes satisfactory reading, the net profit, after charging upkeep and maintenance of plant, amounting to £130,426, which compares with an estimate of £130,000 included in the prospectus issued in March of last year. The £1 participating preference shares are to receive an additional 1 per cent., making $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the year, while the deferred shares receive a dividend at the rate of $27\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. The directors propose to issue the remaining 100,000 $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. cumulative participating preference shares of £1 at not less than 21s. per share. This company's shares in their class appear to possess possibilities.

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Company Meeting

THE UNDERGROUND

CONTINUED EXPANSION OF TRAFFIC

LORD ASHFIELD ON THE NEED FOR INCREASED FACILITIES

The Annual General Meetings of Metropolitan District Railway Company, London Electric Railway Company, City and South London Railway Company, Central London Railway Company, London General Omnibus Company, Limited, Metropolitan Electric Tramways, Limited, London United Tramways Limited, South Metropolitan Electric Tramways and Lighting Company, Limited, London and Suburban Traction Company, Limited, Underground Electric Railways Company of London, Limited, were held on Thursday last at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.

The Right Honourable Lord Ashfield, who presided, said: The traffic for the year 1929, as measured by the number of passengers carried, shows some small advance upon that for 1928. The total number of passengers carried by railway, tramway and omnibus amounted to 2,175 million. The tramways carried 9 per cent. of this total, the railways 18 per cent., and the omnibuses 73 per cent. These figures bring out in a forcible manner the predominance of the omnibuses within your group of companies. If I look further afield at the whole of the traffic carried by local agencies in Greater London, I find that the omnibus share amounts to about 53 per cent. of the whole, so that this predominance is complete and it is also unique, for nowhere else in the capital cities of the world can the omnibus show anything approaching so substantial a share in the fostering of local movement.

During last year the passengers carried by the railways increased by 7 per cent., those carried by the tramways increased by 4 per cent., and those carried by the omnibuses by just over 1 per cent. Perhaps the most satisfactory feature is the increase in the traffic carried by the tramways. It has been the habit in recent years to depreciate the value of the services rendered by tramways in the carriage of passengers, but we have found that if steps are taken to bring the standard of comfort of the tramcars up to that customary upon the railways and omnibuses, and that if steps are taken to increase the general speed of operation of the tramways, the passengers carried by the tramways will increase in numbers, proving that tramways serve to deal effectively and economically with considerable volumes of traffic upon the streets. Owing to the predominance of the omnibuses, the increase in the total volume of traffic carried for the year is just over 2 per cent., and I must admit this compares badly with the increases of recent years, which have reached 7 or 8 per cent. In the two preceding years we recorded a growth in the number of passengers carried exceeding 100,000,000 in the year, but this last year this growth has fallen to approximately 49,000,000.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE YEAR

The principal cause of this decline was, without doubt, the exceptionally severe weather in January and February, coupled with the widespread influenza epidemic. From the losses of those early months, the summer made but a poor recovery. On the average it is, maybe, unfair to blame the year. It all depends upon the point of view. If a long view is taken, there is little wrong with the year, as there is some increase, though, perhaps, not all that we could have wished. But taking a short view, as we are so frequently tempted to do by the constantly recurring weekly traffic returns, our hopes and fears go up and down uncomfortably. There is something rather ironical in the thought that the success or failure of this group of companies, as measured by the balance of their traffic receipts available for distribution to their shareholders, is so largely affected by the luck of the weather.

But if last year started ill, by comparison this year starts well, for the advance that was noted at the close of last year is consistent, and continues into this year. But I should warn you that the increases in traffic now shown upon the published weekly returns, include, for the first time, the results for the omnibuses formerly belonging to the London Public Omnibus Company and that some allowance (about two-fifths of the total increase) should be made for this fresh factor.

PASSENGER RECEIPTS

There is an abnormal growth in the number of 1d. passengers; there has been some extension of cheap return tickets; but chiefly the decline is due to the falling away of the long distance or excursion passengers. This may be attributable to the large number of wet week-ends that we experienced during the summer months, but we are inclined to think that it is mostly due to another cause. While the omnibuses have been restricted and regulated under the terms of the London Traffic Act of 1924, the motor coach has remained free and has multiplied its services upon all the roads leading out of London, carrying on predatory operations against the omnibuses somewhat unfairly, and indeed, trying to establish claims for consideration which should, and we trust will, be resisted by the authorities. The Road Traffic Bill now before Parliament will, we expect, bring some redress. Meanwhile,

in self-defence, we shall be compelled to alter the character of our own widespread country services, working them with fast and improved vehicles and in such a manner as to meet the competition of these new rivals. Yet, in spite of this one adverse factor, the traffic receipts for 1929 amounted in the aggregate to £17,300,000, an increase of £200,000 over 1928, or 1.2 per cent. Throughout I use round figures to ease your memory.

Turning to the expenditure side of the accounts our contribution in petrol tax for the year 1929 amounted to £380,000, in itself a serious abstraction of our funds, and entirely apart from the amount which we paid in respect of licensed vehicle duty, amounting to £435,000, so that under these two heads alone the omnibuses contributed to the revenues of the State during last year a sum of £815,000, or almost 7½ per cent. of their gross revenue. No other form of transport makes a like contribution. Except for this one factor, costs were generally lower during the year.

OPERATING COSTS

The aggregate operating costs for 1929 amounted to £14,326,000, an increase of £327,000 over 1928, or 2.3 per cent. Perhaps the best way in which to measure the relative level of our costs is to relate the costs to the car miles run. The cost per car mile has fallen from 12.27d. to 12.25d., which shows that while on the whole it is unchanged in spite of the increased petrol cost, the tendency is downward still, and that the increase in expenditure is justified by the increase in service.

You will agree, I am sure, that a great transformation has been effected in the position of your Railway Companies. And this great transformation has been effected without loss or injury to the men whom we employ. Rather there has been a gain to them, for with rare exceptions we have been able to pay them higher wages and provide them with more skilled occupation, steadily absorbing into the higher grades the men not required for work in the lower grades.

A REMARKABLE METROPOLIS

London is indeed remarkable as a metropolis, for in spite of the depression in trade and of the falling birth rate, it continues to grow all the while. It has always been the place in which the wealth of the country is spent, though it is rapidly becoming as well the place in which the wealth of the country is gained. In 1929, the population within the Metropolitan Police District was estimated to number 7,900,000, and to this must be added the population of the outer ring of 900,000, making 8,800,000 persons altogether as the population focussed upon this one centre. Anyone who travels round London over the new roads cannot fail to be impressed by the blocks of houses that spring up on all sides and by the new factories which seem to be completed in the night. I am amazed myself. One day I pass down an almost empty road and then the next time the builder is at work, and before one has time to realize it, new suburbs have sprung into being and new industries have been launched. The Londoner can scarcely understand the gloomy prognostications, the pessimistic forecasts which from time to time fill our newspapers and periodicals.

One begins to doubt whether those who write these accounts of the state of our country have made a wide enough survey of the facts, and so far as London is concerned the available figures bear out the impression of the casual observer rather than of the closeted writer. The unemployed of the London area number only 159,534, or about 7 per cent. of the total number of insured workers. Allowing for the margin of casual labour which still exists in London, and allowing for seasonal trades, and for the unemployable, the figure can be little more than a normal allowance for wastage in labour, regrettable as such wastage may seem. For the rest of the country the percentage figure is over 14. These figures take little account of the commerce which is concentrated in London, for those employed in commerce are outside the scope of the insured trades.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

So far as private enterprise is concerned, no one can allege that we have not faithfully discharged our task to the limits of our strength. There may come a time when underground railways will have to be found and provided by public authorities just as roads are now found and provided. The construction of such railways leads to the creation of land values which escape entirely the burden of contributing to the agency which has created them. London has become a centre of a larger life, having an ever-widening influence, and against the cost of providing the transport facilities necessary to maintain this centre must be set many advantages. We may be glad to think that the responsibility for finding a solution has been lifted from our shoulders and has been assumed by the Government, for now we must look to them to make their proposals as to the way in which this problem is to be met.

I trust that I have said sufficient to satisfy you that, difficult as the past year has been, it has not been unsatisfactory. I have realized afresh the resiliency of your Group of Companies as a whole to withstand misfortune and attack. I may therefore look forward with greater courage. I am convinced that the present year, so far as the factors which influence it can be foreseen, will yield better results than the past year. The reports and accounts were adopted.

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H ARROGATE COLLEGE.—Five Entrance Scholarships are open for competition for September 1930, to girls between the ages of 12 and 15; value £90 to £50. Latest date for returning Entry Forms, March 15. Full particulars may be obtained from Headmistress's Secretary.

SANDECOTES SCHOOL, PARKSTONE, DORSET

T HE Council invite applications not later than March 29, for the post of Head Mistress of the above School, to take up duty in September, 1930. Applicants must be members of the Church of England, and University Graduates. For full particulars and form of application, apply to the Secretary, Church Education Corporation, 34 Denison House, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

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Personal

M ATERNITY nurse, aged 62, suffering from diabetes, will have to give up work altogether before long. No relatives and few friends in this country, as her early life was spent in South America. Efforts being made to procure pension or admission to permanent home. Gifts for assistance meanwhile to Preb. Carlile, "Special Cases," The Church Army, 55 Bryanston St., W.1.

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